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The Week

SEVENTEEN years after the close of the War to End War, uniformed men are marching, big guns are reverberating, in many parts of the world. The revolution in Greece, which according to the latest reports is ending in a defeat for the rebels, has cost many lives. Italian troops continue to embark for Ethiopia; the truce arranged between the two countries means nothing, in the light of Italy's determination to obtain additional territory for herself and the bargain she has obviously made with Great Britain and France permitting her to do so. In Cuba, a fresh revolt has started against the Mendieta regime, which has never been popular with the Cuban people and owes its existence largely to the continued interference of the United States government in Cuban affairs. In South America, the fighting between Bolivia and Paraguay goes on; and so, after a fashion, does the attempt of the Nanking government in China to destroy the Communist regime which has proved so extraordinarily indestructible. Among the great European Powers, the quadrille of international politics continues. Great Britain, having offered Germany an aerial Locarno, immediately thereafter announced a tremendous increase in her military forces, thus neatly pointing both horns of a dilemma at Herr Hitler. Der Führer was so annoyed that for a few days he contemplated breaking off the negotiations, but wisely thought better of it after he had had a chance to cool down. Meanwhile, the world's money markets are still in a turmoil, due to the mysterious decline in value of the British pound, a decline that may have the most serious consequences for the gold-bloc countries if it goes on much longer.

ON THE domestic front things have not been much more cheerful than they are abroad. The country was shocked by the news that more than 22,000,000 people—about one-sixth of the population—are now on relief. Nearly all of the fundamental business indicia have once again turned downward, and for the general mass of the population there is no longer the comforting reassurance that Mr. Roosevelt is all-powerful and that he will certainly "do something." On the contrary, Congress is now pretty completely out of hand, and all the important new legislation is held up while the administration tries to bring pressure to bear on the recalcitrants behind the scenes. Stories are afloat in Washington of strong-arm methods, in the form of withholding federal appropriations that were to have been spent in the states of those who have opposed the President's program. A block of leftward Congressmen has been formed. Meanwhile, Senator Huey Long continues to hold the center of the stage in a fashion bewildering to those who do not realize the shrewdness and the uncanny political intuition he possesses. It seems probable that the administration has made a bad mistake in mustering all its forces to prevent the investigation Long has demanded of the New York City business deals of Postmaster General Farley. If the effort is finally successful, they will have given the Louisiana Senator a talking point against the administration for the next two years that is ten times as valuable to him as the result of such an investigation could possibly have been. In Congress, probably the outstanding event of the week has been the progress of the military-appropriations bill, under which we shall spend during the coming year about $3,000,000 a day, or a total of a billion, in preparation for a war for which no one in Washington or anywhere else can find the slightest justification.

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WITH the death of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes the United States has lost its most distinguished citizen. His life was a gallant one, expressing the best of what it means to be an American. He was always courageous without ceasing to be skeptical. In touch with the common ideas and the common needs, he resisted the superficial doctrines used to rationalize injustice by powerful interests. Always an individual, he had a deep sense of the requirements of the national life. He did not let dogma act as a substitute for the speculative mind. The flavor of his personality was no less pungent than the character of his thought. It is impossible briefly to do justice to him, but the occasion cannot pass without an expression of deep sorrow for his death and of gratitude for his life. A more extended comment on Justice Holmes by Professor Morris R. Cohen will appear in an early issue of The New Republic

THE principal result of the government's decision to retire consols and Panama Canal bonds out of the profit that accrued to it from the devaluation of the dollar is to save the budget about $13,500,000 in interest. In this respect it is helpful, as would be any process of conversion or retirement not involving a reduction of expenditures on relief of public works. The effect on the possibilities of inflation is neutral. The obligations retired had the circulating privilege. The government's payment substitutes for them gold certificates, thus keeping the amount of money the same as before. This action could not, of course, be taken before the Supreme Court had decided, validating the government's possession of its gold profit. A minor effect of the payment will be to retire all remaining national bank notes, thus concentrating control of the issuance of currency henceforth with the Federal Reserve and the Treasury.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt has performed a useful public service in calling the country's attention to the orgy of propaganda in which the private power interests have recently indulged. In his special message to Congress this week, urging enactment of the bill that would put an end to the great majority of all holding companies at the end of five years, the President paid his respects in vigorous fashion to those behind this barrage. "I have seen," he says, "much of the propaganda prepared against such legislation—even down to mimeographed sheets of instructions for propaganda—to exploit the most far-fetched and fallacious fears. I have seen enough to be as unimpressed by it as I was by the similar efforts to stir up the country against the securities-exchange bill last spring." The President thus called attention to one of the most terrific propaganda campaigns ever conducted in this country. Members of Congress have received thousands of letters from individuals pretending to be owners of utility securities, demanding that the bill be defeated in their interest. Large numbers of these letters have been identical in wording, showing a common source.

THE evils of the holding company are too familiar to our readers to need repetition here at length. The device is one that permits a small group of shrewd insiders to control a vast domain of operating companies, solely for the benefit of their own pocketbooks. There is no value in such companies, from the public's point of view, that cannot be obtained in other and more legitimate ways. The attempt to regulate the companies has been a grotesque and utter failure. Mr. Roosevelt is right when he says, quoting "congressional leaders I have consulted," that "the abolition of those utility holding companies which cannot justify themselves as necessary for the functioning of the operating utility companies of the country is . . . essential."

IN THIS issue of The New Republic, Melvin M. Fagen describes some of the anti-radical legislation now before the country. The American Civil Liberties Union is concerning itself particularly at the moment with the bills, sponsored by the American Legion and the Elks, introduced in the legislatures of seventeen states thus far, which would bar from the ballot any party advocating "sedition or treason." The Union points out that such legislation is probably unconstitutional; that its vagueness makes it especially dangerous, since the Boards of Election, not the courts, would decide what constitutes sedition or treason and might attach these terms to any party; that it would tend to incite the use of "force or violence" by driving political parties underground. These bills are of course similar to the statute passed by the New York State Legislature during the period of post-war hysteria and vetoed by Governor Smith. In the present wave of anti-radicalism, largely cooked up by W. R. Hearst and others like him, for their own purposes, an attempt is being made to rush these bills through in California, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia.

FOR several months, newspapermen employed on the Newark, New Jersey, Ledger have been engaged in a strike, the chief reason for which was the refusal of the publisher to recognize the Newark chapter of the American Newspaper Guild. A temporary injunction has now been issued against the strikers by Vice-chancellor Maja Berry of the New Jersey Court of Chancery that is certainly one of the most sweeping anti-labor injunctions ever made in America. Arguments will be heard on March 19 on the question of making it permanent. The injunction prohibits virtually every normal strike activity. Strikers and their sympathizers may not "molest" present employees of The Ledger. Picketing and boycotting are forbidden. The

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strikers are not allowed to distribute handbills or any other printed matter or to talk to the present employees of The Ledger in an endeavor to win them over, or to "issue threats of violence on the radio or by sound-truck broadcast"—which means in effect that they are barred from using the radio at all. The American Newspaper Guild has enlisted the aid of United States Senator Robert Wagner in the attempt to have the present situation in Newark investigated by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, which is now considering the Wagner industrial-disputes bill, and he has promised to try to bring this about. Certainly, if this injunction were made permanent, it would be one of the heaviest blows that American labor has sustained in a generation.

THE House of Representatives has passed by an overwhelming majority a repeal of the provision giving publicity to income-tax returns; and reports from Washington indicate that the Senate is likely to do the same, perhaps before this issue of The New Republic appears. We sincerely trust that these reports prove unfounded and that the Senate progressives stick to their announced intention of demanding as an alternative that the entire return shall be made available to the public instead of the summary required by the present law. The only arguments advanced against publicity are the old familiar ones: the law is an invasion of privacy, it is expensive and cumbersome to operate, and it provides kidnapers, swindlers and other racketeers with a ready list of possible victims. These arguments are one and all without merit, and certainly so when weighed against the advantages from such publicity. The overwhelming majority of all rich persons live on a scale that amply advertises their wealth to possible kidnapers and swindlers, and very few of them ever become victims of fake oil-stock promoters and the like, who operate most successfully among the comparatively poor. The law is certainly an invasion of privacy; the question is whether it is a legitimate one. Privacy is also invaded when the law requires that births, deaths and marriages shall be recorded, and demands licenses when one wishes to operate an automobile, keep a dog or go hunting.

THE incomes of most poor people are already a matter of public record, as are those of many members of the middle class. They are to be found in wage statistics, in records of average farm income per acre, in college publications which report the salaries of the faculty and in the government blue books which do the same for officials of cities, counties, states and the nation. The incomes of the wealthy can provide us with an enormous mass of useful social information. They can chart our way through the maze of corporation bookkeeping in which exorbitant profits are now hidden. We can think of only one good reason why any individual should object to publicity regarding his income: because he is ashamed of its size or source. That is a good reason from his point of view, but certainly not from that of the community.

THE Franco-British proposal for an aerial Locarno has already had one important effect. Germany has now admitted that her huge equipment of commercial airplanes has military significance. In future, it will be under the control of the Reichswehr. No one outside of Germany knows how large is the German strength in the air, but everyone knows that it is very great. Two weeks ago the Echo de Paris gave figures, for which it vouched, on the latest additions to Germany's air fleet. It reported that the Third Reich built 450 bombers in the last quarter of 1934, and increased its airplane factories to fifteen and its motor plants to eight. The Germans argue that they are morally entitled to an aerial force in proportion to those of France and Belgium, and estimate on this basis that they should have 8,720 military planes. Herr Hitler is even more ambitious, holding that in view of Soviet Russia's admitted army of 930,000 men, 20,000 war planes for Germany would be about right.

WAS Hitler's cold, which caused him to postpone discussions with the British, a genuine affliction or a diplomatic illness by which he concealed his annoyance when Great Britain announced a proposed large increase in her military strength? In support of the argument that Hitler was actually ill is the official announcement that he is suffering from a malady of the larynx, the direct result of his excessive speech-making during the last few years. This view is further supported by the fact that the outcome of these conversations with the British will be of tremendous importance to Germany. She runs a real risk when she permits the British and the French to deal with Warsaw and Moscow before visiting Berlin. If Hitler's illness was real, it was certainly a most inconvenient affliction.

EVERYONE knows by now that the plight of the Southern sharecroppers and tenant farmers is a desperate one. In thousands of cases the landlords, seeking to take advantage of the cotton-restriction program of the A.A.A., have dispossessed their tenants—to starve, for all the landlords care—or are giving them day labor at 50 or 75 cents a day. An effort is now being made to meet this problem through federal legislation. Senator Bankhead has introduced a bill under which the government would take over large amounts of land in the South now in the hands of insurance companies or of the Federal Land Banks. These tracts would be broken up into small farms and sold to the sharecroppers, white or Negro, on the instalment plan over a long period of years. Money would also be made available to provide the new owner with the necessary capital while he was getting on his feet. Diversified agriculture would be encouraged in every possible way, with the expectation that the purchaser and

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his family would themselves consume much of what they produce. Subsistence farms, of course, solve no fundamental problem, and are open to grave objection on their own account. In the present emergency, however, and purely as a stopgap, they might rescue many thousands of American citizens from slow starvation. Senator Bankhead's bill certainly deserves, at the least, careful consideration.

THE depression has affected the ability of the Russian government to buy machinery from capitalist countries by driving down the prices of many of the goods the U.S.S.R. produces. But the U.S.S.R. has been making rapid strides in obtaining credits abroad through another channel—by stimulating its own gold production. The reports of the American Bureau of Metal Statistics, based on official Soviet figures, show that in 1934 Russia produced 3,600,000 ounces of gold, worth about $126,000,000 on the basis of the devalued Roosevelt dollar. This compares with a production in 1929 of only 1,100,000 ounces, worth only $23,000,000 in Mr. Hoover's Republican sound monetary system. In fact Russia has taken second place in the rank of gold-producing nations, displacing the United States and Canada. Its production today is more than twice as great as it ever was under the Tsarist regime. The gain is particularly impressive when one considers the enormous ballyhoo about the investment possibilities of gold mines that has been broadcast in this country and Canada since the value of an ounce of gold appreciated 70 percent. Individual initiative seems to be running a poor second to collectivism in this case. The U.S.S.R. can afford to feel proud of an industry that has increased its export balance by $100,000,000 in five years.

SENATOR Pat McCarran of Nevada telegraphed jubilantly home the other day that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation had granted a $3,000,000 loan to the Consolidated Coppermines Company of Ely for the purpose of developing its property and "extracting a large body of ore already blocked out." The company owns a low-grade copper mine which also contains some gold and silver. Ore had previously been treated by a neighboring large producer, but the two companies became involved in contract difficulties and now Consolidated Coppermines desires to have its own treatment plant. With the $3,000,000 it will be able to provide capacity for the production of about 50,000 tons of copper a year. The construction of this plant will undoubtedly furnish employment to Nevada building tradesmen, but it so happens that the copper mines of this country are already equipped to produce almost three times as much new copper as was consumed here in 1934. While the R.F.C. subsidizes this addition to copper-production capacity, another federal organization, the N.R.A., strives to reduce the yield through its effective marketing-quota system. Once again we have a conflict in philosophies: the economy of plenty versus the economy of scarcity. In the meantime the housing program, which would stimulate copper consumption and perhaps provide an incentive for private bankers to loan money to Consolidated Coppermines, continues to lag.

What to Do with the N.R.A.

WHAT SHOULD be done with the N.R.A.? First let us look briefly at its record. The Recovery Bill stated its main purposes as "to promote the fullest possible utilization of the present productive capacity of industries, to avoid undue restriction of production . . . to increase the consumption of industrial and agricultural products . . . and to conserve natural resources." The indices of production calculated by Frederick C. Mills of the National Bureau of Economic Research, based on 100 in 1929, run as follows:

	1932	1933	1934 (10 mos.)
Raw Mineral	62	66	71
Manufacturing	60	67	70
Construction	49	36	38

Slight gains were registered over 1933, when the act went into effect, in raw mineral and manufacturing production, leaving them above the bottom of the depression in 1932, but still far below 1929. Construction gained hardly at all, and remained disastrously below 1932. A rise of manufacturing production beginning since Dr. Mills compiled his figures has brought the curve up in recent months, but now it is falling again. Last year a seasonal peak, topping a rapid rise in the spring, was reached in May, after which production steadily declined. It was due largely to temporary activity in automobiles and textiles. What has probably happened this year is that the same sort of rise has reached the same sort of peak, pushed ahead a month. Construction and the heavy industries, outside of automobiles, are still badly depressed. There is little hope of marked gain in production for the year 1935. After nearly two years of trial, the N.R.A. has, on the whole, failed in its major purpose.

There are still some 22,000,000 persons on relief, according to government figures, and something over 10,000,000 are unemployed. Though hourly wage rates have been increased by the codes to or above the 1929 level, the actual earnings of labor have grown much less, on account of shortened hours and part-time work. Meanwhile the cost of living has risen. Dr. Mills's figures for the *real* per-capita earnings of those workers who are employed, based on 100 in 1929, were 91 in July, 1933, when the N.R.A. began to go into effect, and 94 in October, 1934. Since last October wage rates have not risen noticeably, while the cost of living has gone on up more rapidly than ever, on account of the jump in food prices. Meanwhile there is a concealed movement to reduce wages. It is likely that

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the real earnings of employed labor will turn out to be less in 1935 than in 1934.

Clearly the wage-raising and hour-shortening program of the N.R.A., which has all along brought public support to it, and of which the administration is so proud, has not resulted in much net gain to labor, because production and employment have not sufficiently increased. Why the failure? The explanation of conservatives is that wage increases have increased costs of production at the expense of profits. Yet the record of industrial profits does not confirm this statement. Profits are, of course, far below 1929, but they have risen steadily and markedly. Unfortunately there is no sufficient information about costs and prices to explain what the situation is. But one reason why higher hourly wages have not diminished profits is undoubtedly the increase in the productiveness of labor since 1929. The average worker in manufacturing industries turned out about 15 percent more an hour in 1933 than in 1929, according to Dr. Mills. Consequently, with the same hourly wages as in 1929, the cost of his labor per unit of product is considerably less. Another reason for the growth of profits is the slight increase in production. Still another, and perhaps the most important, is the increase of prices of manufactured goods, which, on the basis of 100 in 1929, rose from a low of 68.7 in February, 1933, to 83.1 in October, 1934, since when there has been little change.

In other words, profits have been sought mainly by increase of prices rather than by increase of output. This has put obstacles in the way of production and employment—though they might not have revived in any case—and has robbed labor of any marked gain from its advance in wage rates. The administration of the law has obstructed the attainment of its main declared purpose. As for the conservation of natural resources, the principal industries in which this was an aim—oil, coal and lumber—have continued to be about as wasteful as ever.

Why have these results occurred? The reasons are well known, and have many times been explained in The New Republic. The codes were drawn up and administered by the employing interests. Such "representatives of the public" or of labor as there are on code authorities have virtually no power, and most of them have an insufficient basis of information. As the Consumers' Advisory Board states in its memorandum recommending revision of the act, "Prohibitions against sales below 'cost' with industry itself determining 'cost,' basing point price systems, minimum mark-ups, maximum trade-ins, resale price maintenance, limitations on discounts and guarantees, minimum prices—such restrictive code provisions have little to do with the establishment of basic standards for labor, quality standards for the consumer, or simple honesty for the trade. They may be used, directly or indirectly, to control prices and profits. . . . In so far as they boost prices they operate to reduce output and impair living standards."

Will industry see its error and act differently? In some cases, where codes cannot be enforced and competition breaks through the efforts of organized sellers, prices may come down. But there is no prospect of a change in purpose. At the hearings last winter, code authorities and trade associations presented an almost solid front against alteration of these price provisions. Their only care was to get prices high enough to safeguard profits, no matter how small the volume of output. Their threat was that if they were denied price protection, they would attack labor standards. They conceived the whole effort as one in which the government had offered them a bargain: they were to consent to minimum wages and maximum hours, in return for which their profits were to be assured. The Consumers' Board says: "The effort has been to stabilize profits. But profits cannot be stabilized under a system of industrial freedom. Freedom involves risks. Profits are the incentive, losses the hazards of those who assume risks. When risks are eliminated the economic function of profits disappears. The authors of many of the codes apparently were determined both to have their profit cake and to eat it. In attempting to guarantee themselves a profit margin they have tried to shift to other groups in the community those risks which it was their function to assume. The effort to stabilize profits comes perilously near to stabilized poverty."

It should not, however, be assumed that this type of action by the owners and managers of industry was inaugurated by the N.R.A. and would disappear with repeal of the law. It has long existed to the extent that industry could suppress competition —and that extent has been considerable. In many industries, to quote the Consumers' Board again, "monopolistic control is notoriously present. Competition had passed away long before the enactment of the N.I.R.A. It could not conceivably be resurrected by the reapplication of the anti-trust laws. Here these laws are impotent."

The fundamental mistake in the whole matter has been to suppose that private ownership of industry, whether left to its own devices or called into "partnership" with labor, consumer and government, as President Roosevelt called it, would do anything else than try to dominate policy in its own interest. It is the senior partner. And its interest is to safeguard its share at the expense of the other partners.

We do not believe that the expressed purpose of the N.I.R.A. will ever be achieved, so long as power over output and prices and wages rests with private owners of productive property. We may have booms, as in the past, when production is fairly active, but even then production capacity will not be fully utilized or natural resources conserved. And the booms will be followed by depressions, in which output and consumption of industrial and agricul-

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tural products will be restricted for months or years at a time.

So long as capitalism survives, the interest of those whose incomes do not come from profits is to attempt to use the government as an agency to control the output of industry, the wages paid by it and the prices charged. We are not very hopeful about this sort of attempt, because so long as capitalism survives, the owners of capital are likely to be more successful in using government than are the workers. But at least it keeps the issue clear, and any success won is a gain.

The present task, therefore, is to substitute for the N.I.R.A. a new body of legislation in which the idea of partnership between "industry" and government or labor is completely eliminated. Minimum labor standards may well be kept, but they should be fixed and enforced by strictly governmental agencies, with the coöperation of labor. The Wagner bill clarifying labor adjustment should be passed, to remedy the ambiguities and uncertainties in the administration of Section 7a. All codes and code authorities should be abolished. A governmental agency should be set up to obtain from industry the necessary information on output, costs, prices and profits. On this basis planning to fulfill the aims of maximum output and consumption may be attempted. Necessary controls of industry should be worked out deliberately, and with reference to specific situations, not by the shotgun method. We have an example of the proper procedure in the railroad industry and the report of Coördinator Eastman. Achievement of gains by following this line will be slow; they will be won if at all only by overcoming the opposition of the present governors of industry. The whole effort is likely to fail unless industry is socialized. But at least we shall have begun to build the basis of information and ideas, and we shall have begun to train the personnel that will be needed for a planned society.

Huey Proposes

TWO ATTEMPTS have been made within the last week to pin Huey Long down to answering a few questions about himself and his program. One of these was by The New York Post, which sent him the following list of questions, inviting him to reply over the radio or otherwise:

1. Your forces won the election in New Orleans, but to win you used the National Guard, ripper legislation, and laws to void indictments for stealing ballot boxes. Is this democratic process?

2. The Louisiana Legislature, under your control, passed forty-four bills in two hours and twenty-two minutes. The Associated Press reports that many of the bills were not even read. Was this a democratic process, Senator?

3. Liberal and consumer organizations here charge that Louisiana is one of the most backward states in the union for social and labor legislation. You have made no move to ratify the child-labor amendment, or to enact old-age pensions or minimum wages or unemployment insurance. You know and we know, Senator, you have the power to pass these laws. How do you reconcile that with your "Share Our Wealth Program"?

4. You are on friendly terms, personally and politically, with Governor Talmadge of Georgia. But surely you know that he has used the concentration camp and is now using the National Guard to break the struggle of the textile workers for a better share in that national wealth you pledge yourself to redistribute?

5. The courts and civil authorities of the state of Louisiana were used to break the strike of the longshoremen and to defeat the efforts of the A.F. of L. to end conditions of virtual peonage in the Lane Cotton Mills, the largest in the state. Why did you not bring your political power into play to help those workers?

The New Republic, also, through a Washington representative, invited Senator Long to reply to a group of questions as follows:

1. If you limited wealth to $5,000,000 a person, could enough be taken from those above this amount to give everyone a minimum of $5,000?

If the answer is yes, upon what statistics or economic studies do you base your conclusions?

If the answer is no, where would the extra wealth come from?

2. Is there a problem of producing more wealth than we do now in order that everybody may have enough?

3. What would have to be done to the economic system in order to produce enough, and avoid depression?

4. Are you in favor of public ownership of the means of production?

5. How do you propose to get the capitalists to accept your plan?

6. With what industries would you begin your scheme of reorganization?

7. What is there to prevent your movement from turning into fascism?

Up to the time of writing these lines, Senator Long has replied to neither of these interrogations, except indirectly and in part. For that matter, when he made his much publicized radio address on Thursday night, March 7, he did not even answer General Johnson's vigorous attack on him. Instead, he outlined his famous "Share Our Wealth Plan." After pointing out what everybody knows, that the country is suffering from a gross maldistribution of wealth, that the measures of the Roosevelt administration have done little or nothing to remedy the evils of the depression, and that the President, who has had overwhelming support in Congress and among the people, can blame only himself for the lack of success of his program, Mr. Long made a statement of the principles of the "Share Our Wealth" movement, which may be summarized as follows:

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He proposes a capital levy that will take all fortunes of more than "three or four million dollars." The rich would not be required to sell their stocks and bonds, but to transfer ownership to the United States Treasury. Long estimates that this would bring in $165,000,000,000 or $170,000,000,000.

He then proposes to give every family in the United States (incidentally, he underestimates their number by 5,000,000) a home, an automobile and a radio, to a total value of $5,000 per family. This property could not be sold for debts or taxes. He estimates that this would require a sum somewhere in the neighborhood of $100,000,000,000.

He then proposes a minimum wage designed to give each family not less than $2,500 a year. In order to spread employment, he would lengthen or reduce the working week each year by whatever amount was necessary. He also suggests an annual vacation for every individual of a month, or more or less as required.

With the $65,000,000,000 or $70,000,000,000 left over from his capital levy, he proposes to give a college education to every child in the United States who can show by intelligence tests that he deserves it. If necessary, the government would support the student through college. He also suggests old-age pensions for everyone, beginning at the age of sixty, and states that "he will not quibble" about the soldiers' bonus but will "discharge that obligation and care for them completely."

Long is bitterly opposed to the crop-reduction program of the Roosevelt administration. If too much is produced of any agricultural product, he says, let the government store the surplus in its warehouses. When these surpluses amount to as much as a year's production, the country will "skip the next year" in the production of that crop, and the labor normally employed on it will be used to build and improve roads, to develop flood-control projects and build new electric-power lines.

With much of Senator Long's diagnosis of what is wrong with the country we heartily agree. With some of his program we are also in accordance. Why, then, do we not at once enroll under his banner?

The reasons that we do not are largely implicit in the questions addressed to Senator Long by The Post and ourselves. Both his present program, and his speeches and writings over many years show a profound ignorance of economic processes, and how to get from one state of society to another. Senator Long obviously thinks of the country's wealth in terms of money in your pocket or in the bank. He overlooks the tremendous importance of the machinery by which wealth is produced, of factories, railroads, mines. We do not believe that if Senator Long's capital levy were carried out, it would result in giving everybody $5,000 and make possible a minimum wage of $2,500 a year. What would the government do with its part ownership of industry? Unless industry were operated so as to produce the necessary goods, people's real incomes would still be inadequate. It is not a problem merely of redistributing the symbols of wealth, but of producing income. Senator Long's economics are those of a naïve utopian.

Is he sincere in making his proposals? If he got into the White House, would he make an honest and realistic attempt to carry them out? His record in Louisiana suggests that he would not. His history up to now is that of a clever, unscrupulous and ruthless politician who plays upon the emotions of the rabble in order to get into power, and then does almost nothing to remedy the bad condition he has described. After all, nearly everything he has achieved in Louisiana has been duplicated by Governors of other states who have not created a ripple of national interest by doing so. And conversely, many things have been done for the residents of other states that Senator Long has never lifted a finger to bring about in Louisiana.

On the record, therefore, we see little reason to believe that Long would try to carry out his program when he got into the White House—any more than Hitler has tried to carry out the socialistic aspect of National Socialism in Germany. But even if Long were sincere, his economic ignorance, his total lack of understanding of or appreciation for the labor movement, would make it almost certain that he would fail. What should we then see? Nobody in America has flouted democratic processes so completely as has Long in Louisiana. His political organization has duplicated every sin of Tammany in New York or the Republican machine in Chicago, and has added many of its own. Even if he were elected President in a regular and legal way, you can be quite sure that he would act the dictator from the moment he took the oath of office. The chances are a hundred to one that he would become the spearhead of a fascist movement that would seek to preserve capitalism in its dying struggle by enslaving the working masses of the people as they have been enslaved in Germany and Italy. We are opposed to Huey Long, not because we are antagonistic to his expressed principle of making America a better place for the common man but because we believe in it, because we consider that for him to become President is one of the surest ways to prevent its realization.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Gears Clash in Detroit

REVIVAL in the automobile industry has been looked upon by the administration and by the country as the keystone of industrial recovery. The development of the automobile is in many respects the characteristic American technical achievement. It was the emblem of the New Economic Era. This industry vitalizes basic businesses—steel, cotton, glass, rubber, oil and, more remotely, road-building and construction work.

Thus it has claimed the special solicitude of the N.R.A. and the President. Its code was tempered by concession. The labor strife that threatened last spring was warded off by Roosevelt himself. He negotiated an agreement between employers and employees that set up an individual labor board for production plants and was dedicated to the experiment of proportional representation rather than majority rule of workers. So far as labor is concerned, this agreement forms the crux of the problem. It takes on wide implications, especially since the decision of a federal judge in the Weirton case imperils the control of the N.R.A. over labor conditions and relations. Will the workers, in this and other industries, organize and bargain quite independently, or will government hover over the scene with the primary purpose of keeping peace?

There can be little doubt that the threatened crisis in the automobile labor situation has been averted. From the tone of William Green's speeches on his recent trip through the automobile cities—especially from his statements here in Detroit—it is to be inferred that there will be no strike or strikes led by the American Federation of Labor in protest against the actions of President Roosevelt and the policies of the Automobile Labor Board. Wherever one inquires in Detroit, whether in A.F. of L., employer or Labor Board circles, he finds this belief confirmed. This means that in its controversy with the Labor Board, the A.F. of L. has in fact yielded for the time being. The question of final victory between opposing practices and theories of collective bargaining in the industry hinges upon many elements—chief of which are the permanence of the manufacturers' improved business; their success in regularizing employment in accordance with the recommendation in the Henderson-Lubin report; the degree of willingness of the National Labor Relations Board to hold elections leading to majority rule in workers' representation in the plants manufacturing parts; and the energy and speed with which the A.F. of L. pushes organization throughout the industry.

Not that the Federation has ceased to belabor the Automobile Board and to glare (by inference) at the President. William Green and F. J. Dillon, the general organizer in charge in Detroit, are thoroughly angry. They are the more disgruntled because they know they made a bad mistake in acceding to the compromise of March 25 of last year, which, as has been said, removed labor relations in the industry from the national statutory board and placed them under the Automobile Labor Board responsible to Roosevelt. It was this settlement that introduced the principle of proportional representation of employees as against the practice of majority rule.

The explanation of the Federation's entering the agreement is undoubtedly to be found in the enthusiasm with which it at first subscribed to the N.R.A. This enthusiasm even led it to yield to the President in the crucial matter of collective bargaining. At the conference with the employers at Washington last March, labor was represented by national and local officials of the Federation. The Federation's membership in the industry—both in parts plants and in production plants—was at its maximum. A great strike under Federation auspices impended in Detroit itself. There is reason to believe—though the Federation, in self-justification, denies it now—that the strike would have spread and paralyzed the industry at the peak of its season. The mere announcement of plans for the strike had brought thousands into the Federation. Ten or more strikes in other automobile centers were in force at the time. During the fortnight of anxious negotiation at Washington the employers were frightened, a quavering note obtruded into General Johnson's bluster and the President made no effort to conceal his apprehension. But the Federation listened to the dulcet voice in the White House and yielded to the pressure of patriotism. It permitted itself to be beguiled by the assurance that the settlement inaugurated "a pioneer effort in human engineering." Its chance for controlling organization in the automobile industry was gone.

Promptly thereafter the tide began to turn. The plants were nearing the end of their production season, when routine layoffs occur in volume. Mr. Dillon, returning to Detroit from Washington, had not emerged from the hypnotic state into which the Federation leaders had been thrown by the President's urgings. He met the workers in mass meetings to declare that a vote for strike was a vote for the employers and was an act of disloyalty toward Roosevelt and recovery. Richard L. Byrd, who had been successful in organizing workers of the Hudson and General Motors Truck plants in Detroit into the American Federation of Labor, had been appointed labor's representative on the Automobile Board. But his immediate constituency soon withdrew from the Federation and formed a dual

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union, the Associated Automobile Workers of America. The circumstances of this defection are significant. When automobile workers met in convention in Detroit last June, this group refused to be formally controlled by the general organizer of the Federation. The vast majority of them had had brief experience of the Federation; they were jealous of their autonomy and felt beholden to their local leaders. They complained that in the convention they were unwittingly led into the promise of obedience to the general organizer by adroit parliamentary maneuvers. When they realized this, and were met by tactless demands of the Federation, they broke away. This union, by vigorous proselytizing, won the Automobile Labor Board elections in the plants where it started, and has gained members from as far away as New England. Mr. Byrd is now an honorary member of this dual union, and withdrawal of Federation support from him has injured the Federation though it has not damaged Mr. Byrd's position.

The Federation's influence was further weakened by unnecessary temporizing. Its enemies charge that it failed sufficiently to protest discriminatory dismissals of shop stewards and others in its federal unions. The small number of cases of alleged discrimination brought by the Federation officials before the Automobile Labor Board in its first weeks of operation would seem to bear out this contention. Three additional circumstances weakened the Federation's hold. The first was the speed and effectiveness with which the Automobile Board addressed itself to its task, adjusting the vast majority of grievances directly with the employers, promptly rendering decisions on the remainder after hearings, and settling strikes right and left. A second reverse lay in the growing satisfaction of employers with the Board and its work. Militantly anti-union throughout their history, they had feared that the code, despite the saving grace of the "merit clause," would find them forced into the A.F. of L.'s interpretation of Section 7a; namely, majority rule with the Federation holding the majority. Instead, they received proportional labor representation with the promise of a definite machinery of Board supervision to confirm it—thus permitting the industry to escape any charge of sabotaging the recovery program.

Officials of the A.F. of L. are not in complete agreement about the wisdom of their judgment on these questions, but they are emphatic on the third circumstance: the failure of the Automobile Labor Board to adopt means of determining the relative strength of the various groups of workers in the plants until the settlement had been in operation for eight months—when the federal unions had suffered severe declines in membership. Further, the Board held its first elections in Detroit, where, except in the Ford plants, over which the Board has no jurisdiction, the Federation admits it is weakest. Of the first ten plants in which elections were held, there are federal unions in only four. In only one of these plants—the Hudson—had a union membership list been submitted; and by election time the Federation membership at that plant had been swept off into the dissenting Associated Automobile Workers. The membership lists were submitted soon after inception of the Board. They were intended to form the basis of proportional representation for collective bargaining. After painstaking and expensive efforts to render these lists useful, the Board decided that they were incurably defective and would have to be discarded in favor of elections. The lists of different organized groups contained the same names; checking proved impracticable; disputes over uncertainties of affiliation promised to be endless and perhaps serious.

By this time the production season in the plants was drawing to a close and layoffs had commenced. The Board considered that no fair and certainly no full poll of the workers could be had until production was resumed. The first election took place in the Cadillac plant in Detroit, December 19. The combined election results thus far have put the gravest doubt upon the strength of the Federation in the plants involved. In nominating elections in seventeen plants through February 21 the Federation won only four percent of the nominees. The Federation makes several explanations. The chief is that, having withdrawn from the agreement last September and holding that the Board, consequently, has no right to function, Federation members were instructed to boycott the elections. That they did so is difficult to maintain when it is noticed that most of those entitled to vote did so. In the elections under review, 88 percent of the eligibles voted, and of the eligible voters who were working on the days of the elections, 94 percent voted. On the other hand, it is not unlikely that a proportion of Federation members failed to designate on their ballots the affiliation of their candidates, so that those thus voting were thrown into the unaffiliated group (76 percent). However, if the Federation in the elections here cited is given, in addition to its recorded vote, all of the blank and void ballots and 10 percent of the "unaffiliated," and is credited with all of those not voting—certainly a maximum proportion—it is impossible to build its strength up to beyond 20 percent of the total.

Federation officials have steadily inveighed against the holding of elections in plants where workers are under the eyes of their bosses and, because of well founded fears of future discrimination against them, are prevented from registering their independent choice at the polls. The Automobile Labor Board, which conducts the elections, makes the double answer that this charge is unfounded and that regard for convenience and speed demands continuance of the practice. Careful inquiry reveals that the Board has taken elaborate precautions to rule out coercion of the voters. The rules of the election are posted in the plant days ahead of time, three officials of the Board (having

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no connection with the plant) are in charge of each booth and ballot-box, and anyone interested is invited to be present at the offices of the Board when the locked boxes are opened and the ballots counted. It is probably true, however, that the most perfect formal precautions in the conduct of the elections cannot free the men from obedience to fears long instilled by the widespread espionage system in the factories. Probably these fears would operate almost as strongly if the elections were held in outside halls.

II

Thus far the declining fortunes of the Federation in the automobile industry in the last months have been considered. Its claims, however, as against the somewhat complacent view of the progress of labor adjustment taken by the Board, have recently been bolstered by the appearance of the Henderson-Lubin "Report on Regularization of Employment and Improvement of Labor Conditions in the Automobile Industry." The document, more than 200 pages long and including elaborate statistical exhibits, was rendered by the Research and Planning Division of the N.R.A. at the President's request. It presents an appalling picture of the plight of the workers, reveals a history of cumulative abuses with respect both to labor management and industrial organization, and casts doubt upon the success of the Board up to this time in matters of the most critical importance. According to the report, recovery in hourly earnings is not matched by improvement in regularity of employment, so that annual earnings are low, even for the most skilled workers. Few automobile workers are able to obtain employment during layoffs outside of the industry. The worker is under an "espionage system which he knows is spying on him day and night." The speed-up, due to the drive to cut costs so as to be able to offer cars at depression prices, and encouraged also by the huge supply of men seeking work, has set "production demands beyond human capability to produce day after day." As a rule, men past forty, once they are laid off, find it almost impossible to get back their jobs. Not told that they are excluded because they are industrially superannuated, they apply in vain for rehiring, and are finally sickened by hope deferred. Instances are cited of men presenting a grievance to the foreman only to be taken to the window and shown the waiting lines of the unemployed as sufficient answer to the protest. The report concludes that the seniority rules early promulgated by the Automobile Labor Board "seem not to meet the needs of those workers who have voluntarily presented their problems to those conducting this survey."

The findings of the Henderson-Lubin report formed the staple of William Green's speech to the mass meeting in Detroit, February 23, and he topped off this reliance by a strong endorsement of Senator Wagner's National Labor Relations Bill, which outlaws company unions, establishes the principle of majority rule in workers' representation, subordinates all local and special labor boards, such as that in the automobile industry, to the new statutory body instead of permitting them to report to the President, and gives the national agency authority to issue "cease and desist orders."

The Automobile Labor Board does not regard itself as a participant in any controversy with officials of the American Federation of Labor. Nevertheless, it is possible to frame the replies of the Board to certain specific charges made by the Federation in addition to those already mentioned.

The Federation claims that the large majority of actions taken by the Board in cases of complaint have run against the workers, and classifies the formal decisions to show this, beginning with the large block of half the cases (97) in which the Board ruled that the layoff, discharge or failure to rehire was not discriminatory or improper. Members of the Board point out that this neglects more than a thousand cases in which satisfactory adjustment was had between employer and employee through informal mediation of the Board, that more than 200 others are in process of similar adjustment, and that 550 complaints were withdrawn.

The seniority regulations of the Board, the Federation declares, do not prevent use of the "merit clause" in the code as a cover for discriminations against workers because of union activity. The Board rejoins that it hears all grievances promptly, that its orders are complied with by the companies, and—by way of obiter—the merit clause (that "employers in this industry may exercise their right to select, retain or advance employees on the basis of individual merit, without regard to their membership or non-membership in any organization") confers no prerogative not enjoyed by employers generally in open-shop industries.

As mentioned earlier, the Federation asserts that the Board has no status. The reasoning here is that the settlement of March 25 was made between the Automobile Chamber of Commerce and the A.F. of L., that the Board was a creation of this agreement, and that, no definite tenure being conferred on the Board, when the Federation repudiated the agreement the Board, *ipso facto*, ceased to exist. The Board's position is—and the President has obviously concurred in it—that the settlement was between representatives of the employers and representatives of labor, and that the Federation arrogates wholly unjustified importance to itself in presuming that it, as an organization, was the exclusive labor participant in the negotiations leading to the agreement.

The Federation goes further and charges that the Board indulges in a sinister tutelage of the workers' committees elected under its authority in the methods they should pursue in collective bargaining. It is said that the Board is setting up "schools" for the bargaining committees, the tendency of the instruction in which is to sap the force

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of workers' demands upon the employer. Here, it is alleged, is the beginning of a subjugation of labor by government in collaboration with employers; to the attentive ear it hints loudly of coming fascism.

The answer of the Board to such a serious insinuation is properly that of simple explanation of its procedure. The day after a bargaining committee is elected in a plant, the Board's phones begin to ring, bringing many insistent and important questions from the new representatives. May the committee meet with no representative of the employer present, thus getting away from a traditional restriction imposed upon the company unions? Where and when may the committee meet? Who pays the committee members for the time lost from their jobs? The Board considers that its responsibility is to provide the means of collective bargaining, and in the discharge of this duty it invites the unacquainted committee to its office for a discussion of privileges and obligations. The Board, as a matter of fact, in addition to its own exposition, regularly asks for opinions and suggestions from the members of the committee. The session may last a couple of hours.

So much for the present posture of forces in the automobile labor situation, except that a word must be said about the complacency of the employers over the turn events have taken. Representatives of employers' associations in Detroit make no attempt to conceal their satisfaction in the governance of the Automobile Board and in the repeated extensions of the code without significant change. Detroit employers, and to a less extent the other employers in the industry, have always been militantly anti-union; they discovered, when the N.R.A. came along, that they would be obliged to accept a measure of oversight in their labor policies; they agree that proportional representation, with retention of the merit clause, is an innocuous minimum. They feared William Green, and they are convinced that his locks, not too thick except to the frightened eye, have been shorn. The employers agree to the injunction, now inserted in the code in accordance with the main recommendation of the Henderson-Lubin report, that attempt be made to regularize employment by bringing out new models in the autumn instead of at the first of the year, but some of them were already working toward this objective.

As for the rest, they come out with sarcastic statements about arithmetical slips in the report's calculations, thus in effect siding with the Automobile Labor Board, which regards the survey as having been too hastily made and founded largely upon testimony volunteered and therefore biased. They try to forget the Denver Tramway and Houde decisions of the old and new national labor boards, and gather their strength to fight strongly for the freshly introduced Wagner industrial-disputes bill.

III

What is to be one's judgment about the opposition between the provisions of the automobile settlement of last March on the one hand, and the contentions of traditional unionism, presented by the American Federation of Labor, on the other? Of course it may be held that there is no fundamental difference; that the Federation, if it adheres again to the agreement and acts with sufficient celerity and vigor, may achieve predominant influence in many of the remaining elections, and might expect to extend its power from year to year. Theoretically, there is no objection to this view, and there is historical precedent, though not wholly analogous, for it. In the clothing industry, Sidney Hillman captured a company union in a single factory, and from that beginning built a militant national labor organization on class-conscious lines. However, the Federation, in the present instance, raises two practical objections, the first of which may later be obviated, while the second may solidify into an insuperable obstacle. The Federation complains that its name does not appear on the printed ballots, which means, considering the special difficulties in the way of union propaganda in this industry, that the workers vote for men and not for the organization. The Board replies that no more does the name of any company union or splinter group appear on the ballot form, and that labor officials who do not drill the names of the union candidates into the workers' minds have no right to expect results at the polls.

In the second place the Federation charges that the Board and its machinery inevitably lead to a fatal division of the workers that plays into the hands of the employers. The Board, answerable to the President's eagerness for prompt recovery, will be content with the shadow of collective bargaining, neglecting the substance. There is the danger of labor groups being subjected to government operating primarily in the interest of industrial ownership. If this fear materializes we shall have in America the signature of the corporative state.

The Board finds itself confronted by a problem requiring prompt even though experimental action. The workers have borne the brunt of the depression, extremely severe in this industry that before had ridden the crest of the wave. Those now being taken back to work find themselves menaced by all sorts of new economies of operation. The hungry unemployed form a threatening cordon about them. The workers' first need, in anyone's view, is for security. For security there must be rules, and rules necessitate bargaining agencies to negotiate and administer them. The Board is trying, through its own seniority provisions and adjudications, and by setting up shop committees through its electoral procedure, to meet the emergency. It is, of course, conscious of the inconvenience to the President and the undoubted setback to recovery that must result from turmoil and stoppage in this industry.

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This program may develop and alter beneficially, but it seems probable that in the long run the automobile workers and the country will profit most from the proposals of the A.F. of L. The present bargaining committees supply no more than shop councils. While there are now faint beginnings of organization among these plant committees, they will never fill the place, in bargaining strength, of a national labor union. The committee within the individual factory is a head without a body. The several members of the bargaining agency do not know, and certainly are not held closely responsible to, their constituents. The device of proportional representation entails divided councils and consequently fatal weakness.

While the Federation has the right side of the argument, it has been slow and inept instead of active and decisive. It made a mistake in accepting the settlement of March 25, 1934. Then was the time to be dogmatic, using the strike weapon as a compelling threat. Having erred at that critical juncture, its dogmatism since has appeared in the light of obstructionism and stubbornness. Its officials explain, when pressed, that a strike is not recommended now, for the 176 federal unions have only 20,000 paid-up members. However, little is being done to mend this defect. In Detroit, where the Federation has least strength and where, therefore, the need would seem to be greatest, there are only four organizers. The Federation says that the workers do not respond readily to the union appeal—most of them have the non-union background of farm or small town. The observer of a few days is reluctant to oppose his impression to the conclusion of experienced leaders, but one gathers that the men seen in union halls and talked with in chance acquaintance are much readier for vigorous espousal and determined action than their leaders allow. They fear and hate the speed-up, which they truthfully say makes slaves of them, and they see no hope of controlling it through the kind of bargaining agencies set up by the Automobile Labor Board. They have suffered so much as victims of the long layoffs that they are ready to suffer still more in their own defense. The Federation is now invited to back its philosophy with the assiduous organization of the automobile workers into a powerful industrial union.

BROADUS MITCHELL.

Detroit.

Congress Finds a Scapegoat

IN ONE respect at least, Congress has done more to raise the temperature of the purge-by-fire being prepared by our industrial and patriot chefs than all the steaming of a dozen Liberty Leagues, Father Coughlins and William Randolph Hearsts. There has appeared, during the first two months of Congress, a united front of business leaders and chauvinists that apparently seeks to drive communism under ground by using anti-alien legislation against the workers, their leaders and their sympathizers. No less than six bills have been brought up for passage that would make it a federal crime to be a Communist, or to be affiliated with any organization advocating radical social change. These bills, if passed, would permit the deportation, without judicial process, of all aliens having such views or affiliations and would subject all working-class leaders and sympathizers to the terrorism of a national criminal-syndicalism law.

Seven other bills, supplementing these, seem to be calculated for use against radical aliens, and four more measures would prevent aliens from holding jobs and would have their names stricken from the relief rolls. Nor must Mr. Dickstein be forgotten; he now proposes to make his Committee on Subversive Activities a worthy successor to the Fish and Lusk inquisitions. It would be called the Committee on the Preservation of American Democracy and would be a permanent Red-hunting body.

The most important of these new legislative proposals are the five bills that would make it a federal crime for anyone, citizen or alien, to advocate or promote the overthrow of the government by force and violence. If these bills are enacted into law, it will mean that any member of the Communist Party may be jailed as a criminal. It will mean that anyone who has in his possession revolutionary literature, with or without knowledge of the contents, may be subjected to the same punishment. Our courts have already held in numerous instances that if a person is a member of the Communist Party or even of such an organization as the American League Against War and Fascism or the League for Industrial Democracy—even though he claims he does not believe in the violent overthrow of the government but merely envisages the day when the present social system will decay—he will be presumed to have violated the law.

This is the law Congressmen Tarver and Ramspeck (Georgia), Fulmer (South Carolina), Blanton (Texas) and Taylor (Tennessee) wish to impose upon the inhabitants of the United States. The weight of evidence is immaterial; intent is irrelevant; and affection for the republic is to be judged by membership in nothing more radical than the Progressive Party.

Even without further legislation, the naturalization laws of the United States place more severe penalties on political dissenters and radicals than do

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those of any other country, not excepting fascist Germany, Japan and Italy. As the law stands at present, one who believes either in the desirability or ultimate possibility of social revolution cannot be naturalized. And if, at any time after naturalization, he expresses such views or joins an organization advocating them, his naturalization is considered fraudulent and can be forfeited, with deportation as a consequence. Nevertheless, Congressman Dies finds the present deportation law for anarchists and revolutionaries too vague; he has proposed that the word "communist" be expressly written into our deportation laws and that all alien communists be immediately deported. This transmigration is to be facilitated by the establishment of a Bureau of Alien Deportation in the Department of Justice. According to the Dies resolution, this Bureau shall "ferret out" and deport all alien criminals and all those illegally in this country.

If this law is adopted we may anticipate a repetition of the Red raids of Attorney General Palmer who, following the War, signed 6,350 deportation warrants within a space of six months. The use to which our deportation laws can be put in industrial crises was never better illustrated than in the San Francisco general strike of last July. Not only did General Hugh Johnson use all of his personal prestige to break the strike, but it was probably through his influence that a telegram was sent to Miss Perkins on July 18, requesting that the federal immigration authorities "arrest and hold for deportation aliens in this state" who are guilty of participating in or aiding "any violent or unlawful action or riot."

It has been reliably said, to Miss Perkins' credit, that she neither saw this telegram nor authorized any reply. Nevertheless, some inside wire-puller with sufficient authority to use the name of the Secretary of Labor without her consent sent a reply assuring the Governor that the deportation laws authorize the apprehension of those who teach communism.

There are also two bills, introduced by Congressmen Hoeppel of California and Taylor of Tennessee, that would order the deportation of all aliens who, before a certain time, have not applied for their first papers. This measure would make deportable criminals of those who, because of administrative error or other reasons, have no certificate of arrival or who, because they would be classified as radicals, cannot apply for naturalization. In effect, it would be a means of "ferreting out" alien communists or working-class leaders by forcing them to hide from the law or be deported.

Four other bills have been proposed to solve the unemployment problem by making it illegal to employ any alien while there are American citizens out of work. According to Congressman Stubbs of California, his measure will also protect "American citizens of military age [sic] who are subject to conscription in time of war . . . by guaranteeing to them in times of peace an arbitrary preference over aliens for employment." However, such discrimination against aliens would be a patent violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the due-process clause. Therefore, Senator Ashurst of Arizona has introduced a bill to change the Constitution in order to permit states to restrict the employment of aliens.

It is not difficult to locate the head-waters of this legislative flood. A few weeks before Congress convened, the United States Chamber of Commerce sprinkled the country with a pamphlet entitled, "Combating Subversive Activities in the United States." This Report to the Board of Directors of the Chamber was more than a mere review of the Fish committee's findings. It contained a section devoted to measures needed because "there is no statute making it an offense for a person to be affiliated with the Communist movement or to disseminate Communist propaganda." Therefore, the Chamber makes six recommendations for legislative action, each and every one of which is incorporated almost verbatim in the bills now before Congress:

> 1. To enact a sedition law making it a criminal offense to be a Communist, to advocate such principles or to be affiliated with any organization of such a nature.
>
> 2. To bar from the mails any matter advocating these principles or published by any group representing them.
>
> 3. To specify that aliens holding communist beliefs should not be permitted to be naturalized.
>
> 4. To make more rigorous the existing law for mandatory deportation of alien communists.
>
> 5. To make it a crime to disseminate literature that would lead to disaffection among the armed forces of the United States.
>
> 6. To create a special agency in the Department of Justice to investigate subversive activities, "especially the Communist Party."

Thousands of these bulletins have been distributed by local Chambers of Commerce to business men, industrialists, bankers and professional people.

Perhaps the most effective lobby engaged in this drive to legislate communism out of existence and aliens out of the country is the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, a federation of more than one hundred organizations under the leadership of John B. Trevor and Walter S. Steele. Trevor was one of the sponsors of the booklet, "Communism in Germany," which was printed and exported by the National Socialist Party and circulated in this country as a defense of Hitlerism. It was Steele who appeared before the Dickstein Committee a few weeks ago with the famous "Communist plot to kidnap the President." On January 14, Trevor made public an address to his "fellow citizens," in which he suggested that all aliens be immediately deported in order to solve the unemployment problem. He placed the number of prospective deportees at 4,000,000. "This is no time to be soft-headed or faint-hearted. They could be supported by the governments that have repudiated $12,000,000,000

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of their obligations to the government of the United States," he said, for "this country is not a charitable institution nor an almshouse for all the world." In an open letter to President Roosevelt dated January 23, Trevor leveled his guns at Secretary Perkins for the small number of deportations, asked that members of the Trade Union Unity League be treated as communists, and protested against the admission as temporary visitors of Emma Goldman, Henri Barbusse, Tom Mann, John Strachey and 250 German children whose parents have sent them to the United States to escape Nazi oppression.

These central offices for the campaign against aliens and radicals work in collaboration with the Hearst newspapers and the American Legion. The Legion has just addressed letters to all of the leading college presidents in the country asking them to report on "subversive activities" in their institutions. The time for such tactics could not have been better chosen. Strikes and industrial conflict are impending; labor is growing in strength and is becoming conscious of its power; aliens do not vote and, moreover, they are feared and hated more severely than ever. The professional patriots have made them all Bolsheviks. The middle-class dread of an "enemy within the gates" has been successfully stimulated and used to draw public attention from the hideous reality of poverty to the artificial mania of persecution. Hitler and his industrial paymasters rode into power in Germany by exploiting this same psychosis. Is America, too, looking for a scapegoat?

MELVIN M. FAGEN.

We Drift Toward War in the Orient

WHETHER or not the proposed international loan to China goes through matters less than that it was proposed at all. That the American government should have let the proposal even come to the point of serious discussion can be explained only on one of two grounds. Either the American government is willing to take the United States into war with Japan or it has been guilty of the most egregious ineptitude. At the best, the loan will fall through and one more futile gesture will have been made, to be added to the Stimson doctrine as demonstration that we are helpless in the Far East and China must bend to its fate. At the worst either we will be in for periodic blackmail to buy off China from surrendering to Japan or Japan will take up the challenge now and establish definitive control over China at once—unless we go to war.

Since 1931 the position of all Western nations with reference to the Far East has been this: whenever a week passed without some new encroachment by Japan, that week could be counted fortunate; all they could hope for was that the next week would pass similarly; all they could do themselves was to refrain from any steps that would disturb the balance in such a way as to give the Japanese a pretext for going further. What they have done now by bringing up the loan is to give the Japanese just such a pretext.

Two years ago, after Japan had consolidated her hold on Manchuria, added a province in Eastern Inner Mongolia to the fictive Manchukuo and, by sending troops to the gates of Peiping, established power of blackmail over all North China, she took the next logical step. The Foreign Office Spokesman issued his famous statement elaborating what the other Powers henceforth would or would not be permitted to do in China. In effect they were warned to keep out. Specifically they were forbidden to make loans to the Chinese government. From that point it was clear, even to ingenuous American liberals still tremulous over the Kellogg Pact, what Japan's intentions were. She had made a preliminary declaration of hegemony over China, formal consummation depending only on the advent of a fortuitous combination of circumstances. The time alone was in question. The end was foredoomed, escapable only if some third Power went to war to stop the Japanese.

The combination of circumstances may very well have arrived now, thanks to the proposed loan. For some months the Japanese have been bringing relentless pressure to bear on China for "reconciliation." The terms of reconciliation have been veiled by the Japanese themselves and can only be conjectured by others, but their purport is plain. China must accept a status of tutelage, with Japan as intermediary in all her relations with the West. In other words, Japan gets political and economic priority in China, and China becomes a protectorate.

The Chinese government has been holding out, but not too lustily. By some its good faith has been impugned, and to a certain extent it is doubtless motivated by a desire to maintain itself in power above all else. To that end it must have additional financial resources, partly because it is chronically impoverished, partly because the American government's irresponsible silver policy has shaken the country's economic equilibrium, and partly because it wants to buy arms to crush the communists. But were the Nanking government's motives ever so pure and patriotic, it would have no alternative, since the Japanese hints have carried obvious warnings of punishment should China prove recalcitrant, and the memory of the Japanese aerial bombard-

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ment of Shanghai is still fresh. Also these hints have carried unmistakable temptation in the form of loans in return for reconciliation.

Presumably it is to meet the last temptation that the international loan has been brought forward, the theory being that thus China can be kept from falling into Japan's clutches. If so, the reasoning is palpably fallacious. China is not in danger of falling into Japan's clutches because of her economic straits, but because of Japan's determination to establish control of the Far East while the Western Powers are too busy with their own political and economic concerns to do so themselves. If the Chinese government were fiscally prosperous and the country's internal economy flourishing, Japan's ambitions and actions would be the same. Japan is pursuing the course on which she set out years ago, one from which she can be deflected only by war.

An international loan cannot save China from Japan. If it has any direct result, it is more likely to work to the contrary. For then both the Powers and China will have violated the prohibition laid against foreign loans to China, and thus disturbed the peace of the Far East—as the Japanese General Staff defines peace. Japan is thus given the opportunity she seeks, namely, to foreshorten the tortuous process of alternate diplomatic and military aggressions by swooping down from the North again in one final coup. If she does so, she will not withdraw from the gates of Peiping this time. She will settle China's fate once for all. In that case the Western Powers will have to choose between sending a fleet, and then an expeditionary force, to evict the Japanese, and accepting the accomplished fact—North China added to Manchukuo as a Japanese colony.

Now, this is almost certain to happen no matter what the Western Powers do. But that they should have been unaware that they were running the risk of precipitating it at once is hardly credible. More particularly it is hardly credible that the American government should have been unaware of the risk, for in practical politics if a fleet is sent to evict the Japanese it will be an American fleet. As everybody in the world knows except the American people, it is the United States that is being counted on by the European nations with imperialistic possessions in the Far East to preserve the status quo there by checking the Japanese. It is not without bearing that the initiative for an international loan came from London. The British run little risk.

It is impossible to understand on what logic the American government has moved. The most charitable conjecture is that, knowing there is very little chance that the loan will materialize, it is attempting a finesse in the diplomatic grand style. For a combination of reasons, some inhering in Western economic conditions and some in Chinese political conditions, a loan is scarcely feasible. Granting that the money could be found, the question of security would be raised again. By the terms of the old Consortium agreement, the Powers are pledged not to make loans to China without supervision over the expenditure of the proceeds, a concession that China is hardly likely to make and one that it certainly would not abide by, as the Powers realize. There are almost insuperable obstacles to a loan aside from Japan's objection, and it may be that the British and American governments are trying to bring the Japanese into the open by the threat. If so, the finesse is clumsy. The Japanese are well aware of all the reasons why the loan is impracticable. The threat will not bring them into the open. If it did, it would be in a way we could not meet. What does it avail to have the Japanese pronounce a preventive veto?

Then again it is demonstrated to the Chinese, as at Geneva in 1931, that Great Britain, the United States and France cannot protect them against Japan, a fact of which the Japanese will make skillful use in their subsequent demands on the Chinese and, further, one that will weigh heavily with the Chinese in deciding whether it is worth while trying to resist Japan. And what could we do if, after a preventive veto of an international loan, the Japanese proceeded to force a loan on China themselves in one form or another, though plainly in violation of the Nine Power Treaty, dead but unburied? The taking of Manchuria was a much worse violation, and we could do nothing about that.

At the best the diplomatic maneuver, if it is intended only as that, can accomplish nothing; at the worst it can give the Japanese a pretext. And on general grounds it may be said that Metternichian subtleties can be practised only by states that have armies and navies to be used and are willing to use them. History proves that diplomatic subtleties are always reconnoitering operations in advance of war operations. Moreover, the Far East is now too inflammatory for pre-1914 stratagems. It will be little less than a miracle if war in the Far East is averted in the next few years under any circumstances. It is foolhardy to take actions that cannot be effectual without force, especially foolhardy to take actions that compel decision to be taken before decision is inescapable.

Sooner or later the American government must make up its mind whether or not it is willing to accept the establishment of Japanese hegemony over China—with the consequences to America in the loss of potential trade. If it is willing, then it must cease making declarations, gestures, maneuvers, protests and all the other conventional preliminaries to warfare. For unless it is prepared and willing to go to war, those measures are now futile in the Far East. Japan will bend to nothing except force. She has proved to her own satisfaction since the conquest of Manchuria that she need not yield except at the approach of a navy—and rather than yield then she would fight. And unless the American government is willing to go to war it is both useless and dangerous to continue to in-

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ject irritants into a situation already inflamed. Why protests? Japan flouts them. Why warnings? Japan does not heed. Why even consideration of loans? The situation that makes a loan politic now will be repeated a year from now, and again the Chinese will have to have financial help from the West unless they are to take it from Japan at Japan's price. A situation, incidentally, that the new-style Chinese mandarin does not deplore any more than the old. Bidding up one Power against another is a classic stratagem in China. There is no possibility of defending China from Japan except with a navy. Efforts to do so without a navy only increase the probability of our having to use the navy whether we originally intended to do so or not.

If, on the other hand, the American government is willing to go to war rather than to let China fall to Japan, then it is unnecessary to resort to diplomatic maneuvers. It need only wait until Japan gives the challenge by taking the North China ports. Why accelerate the challenge? But before the American government is permitted to decide that it prefers war to Japanese domination over China, it might not be amiss to ask whether the American people do too. Probably there is no question in American life today, not even excepting the economic, that more insistently demands to be faced out intelligently by the American people. Without evil intent, without design and perhaps even without conscious recognition, their government in the last few years has been taking them step by step in the direction of war in the Pacific. Each step is irrevocable before the American people even know that it has been taken. The World War proved that wars cannot be prevented the week before they break out. Historians may quarrel passionately over whether one mobilization order was given fifteen minutes earlier than another. It does not matter. The war was made years before the mobilization orders or the assassination at Sarajevo. The war in the Pacific is being made now. Preparations will soon be in the final stages unless the American people ask themselves whether China means enough to them to send their sons to die in Manchuria and then call off their government if it does not. What China means to them is no doubt a chance to get jobs at making goods that we hope to sell to the Chinese people unless the Japanese put up a new wall around China. But war is not the only solution to the problem of providing jobs. It is only the conventional solution in the first third of the twentieth century. And even a successful war probably would not leave many jobs after the fighting was over.

The sudden flurry over an international loan to China may prove to have been only a heavy attempt to be subtle. But it has enough elements of danger to be foolhardy. In any case, it is the sort of thing that cannot be continued without sooner or later taking us into a war. It is the sort of thing the American people cannot permit their government to do unless they want war. Just what a people can do to stop their government from taking such actions in foreign relations is another matter.

NATHANIEL PEFFER.

Consumer Coöperation in Europe

A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT.—It is news to most Americans that one hundred million consumers all over the world are members of the Consumers' Coöperative Movement, united through the International Coöperative Alliance. Many Americans are startled by the revelation that the largest business in England is the Coöperative Wholesale Society and that one-seventh of all the goods consumed in England is sold by the coöperative societies.

The history of the development of the economic branch of the people's struggle reads like a fairy tale, beginning with the puny efforts of the twenty-eight poor weavers of Rochdale, leading up to the present-day development where the consumers' cooperative societies in many places throughout the world are the soundest and the most efficient business organizations in their respective communities. During the past ten years, when profit business has been closing its factories, discharging employees and cutting wages, the coöperatives have steadily opened new factories, employed more people and produced better goods at competitive prices.

Scotland is the home of the oldest existing cooperative societies, some being over one hundred years old. Driving through the streets of Edinburgh, Glasgow and the many small towns and villages, the coöperative shops immediately loom up as the largest and finest establishments in each place, but the real treat for the visitor comes when he reaches Shieldhall, in Glasgow, the center of the productive works of the Scottish Coöperative Wholesale Society. Here are concentrated a boot and shoe factory, a jam factory, printing works, motor-coach works and a variety of other enterprises, employing over 4,500 workers who produce goods exclusively for sale by the member societies. Coming from Glasgow to Manchester, we find a repetition of the Scottish story on a highly magnified scale. Manchester is the headquarters of the Coöperative Wholesale Society, which, from its humble beginning, in 1864, has now reached a point where its capital is $54,000,000 and annual sales over $415,000000.

In Denmark, consumers' coöperation is practically universal in the agricultural area. Although

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Denmark has suffered severely as a result of the creation of international barriers, which have limited the markets for its agricultural products, the consumers' coöperative movement has forged steadily ahead, and is now creating new productive works, employing more people and increasing its turnover. It is not unlikely that Denmark's economic salvation will come through the rapid growth of coöperative industry that has been made necessary by the rapidly contracting agricultural market.

Consumer Coöperation in Sweden.—Probably the most startling development is to be found in Sweden. Here, consumer coöperation, although very young, is rapidly expanding. The present movement can be said to be only twelve years old. The Swedish coöperatives are unlike the English in that they do not carry so large a variety of goods. Until recent years they dealt exclusively in foodstuffs, but now they operate factories making boots, shoes, overshoes, electric lamps and automobile tires. The Stockholm Society alone operates 341 shops in that city—the most modern and beautiful stores in Stockholm. The new headquarters building of the Stockholm Society is a structure that architects and engineers from all parts of the world come to see. The weekly publication of the K. F. (the Swedish Wholesale Society and Educational Agency) is the most widely read periodical in Sweden.

The Swedes are building on a sound foundation. Considerable attention is paid to educational work. They maintain a fine educational institution at Saltsjobaden, where courses are given for managers, committee members, shop assistants and officials of the movement. At this school not only coöperative philosophy is taught, but technique of management, salesmanship and window display. Esthetic considerations are stressed, color combination and design play an important part in the technical courses. In addition to this resident institution, the K. F. operates a correspondence school which is open to anyone interested. This school has an enrolment of over seventy-five thousand persons. The educational program also includes about a thousand study groups in economic and coöperative subjects, using special textbooks published by K. F. It is also interesting to note that the most widely circulated handbook on economics was published by K. F.'s publishing department.

In Finland the movement is divided into two distinct groups—the agricultural and the urban. Both are about equal in membership and in volume of business transacted. Here, too, as in Sweden, the coöperatives are building with vision and efficiency. The Finns, like the Swedes, have reached the point in coöperative development where they can safely disregard the policy of selling goods at the prevailing market price. The coöperatives set the price at a point that is unattractive to private trade. The result of this policy is that dividends on purchases are much lower than in England, but the benefits derived are nationwide. In the city of Helsingfors, the Elanto Society and the O. T. K. (urban movement's wholesale society) dwarf all other enterprises. The finest commercial structure in the city is the beautiful ultra-modern central offices of the O. T. K. The Elanto Society has not only constructed modern dwellings for its workers and provided week-end resorts, but it also maintains an island where a nursery school is conducted for children of mothers employed by Elanto. It should be noted that consumer coöperation has no political opposition in Finland.

A Triumph in Russia.—After leaving Sweden and Finland, one feels that the coöperative achievements of these countries would be hard to match, but upon examining what has happened in Russia within the last few years the conclusion is inevitable that the possibilities of expanding coöperation are greater still. Membership in consumers' coöperatives has grown from 37,000,000 in 1930 to 71,000,000 in 1934, and share capital has increased in the towns from 88,000,000 rubles in 1928 to 636,000,000 rubles in 1933, and in the villages from 94,000,000 rubles in 1928 to 1,140,000,000 rubles in 1933. Unquestionably, the amazing growth of consumer coöperation in Russia is due to the favored position in which the coöperatives have been placed in recent years in the Soviet state. The coöperatives have achieved a virtual monopoly in the field of distribution, in the production of baked goods and in the operation of vegetable farms.

In the U.S.S.R., as elsewhere, the coöperatives have established their supremacy by virtue of efficiency and technique. The average stock of goods in coöperative stores has been reduced by half, from 1929 to 1934, and the retail turnover has increased 200 percent in the villages and 100 percent in the towns in the same period. The growing efficiency of the movement in the U.S.S.R. is further demonstrated by their success in reducing administrative expenses from 19 percent of the total expenses in 1932 to 15 percent in 1934, accompanied by an enormous growth in size and volume. The relationship of the Russian coöperators to those in other countries is especially interesting because of the difference in political orientation. The Russian wholesale society, Centrosoyus, has been very active in fostering international coöperative trade, and it is reported that the trade between the English Cooperative Wholesale Society and Centrosoyus for the past year amounted to £3,000,000, or about $15,000,000. Centrosoyus has also been active in the International Coöperative Alliance, and at the London Congress held in September, 1934, took a part in the activities of the Alliance commensurate with its position as the society having the largest membership and turnover.

The uniform success of consumer coöperation in the countries discussed, during the years that profit business has suffered its worst setback, would seem to indicate the power of consumer coöperation as a means of fighting the depression.

MEYER PARODNECK.

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Washington Notes

Power—Now You See It, Now You Don't—
Three Defeats for Roosevelt—
Fog Over 1936

WHATEVER else the present Congress has done or not done, it has shown that you can't make any predictions about politics. When the elections last November sent an overwhelming majority of Democrats to the House and Senate, it was at once assumed that Roosevelt's power would be complete and irresistible. The 1935 program would go through exactly as Mr. Roosevelt wanted it. The majority of the members in the House and Senate were elected because of his popularity. That they would follow him blindly was a foregone conclusion. Such was the general idea of nearly every politician and political observer when Congress convened; an idea, I freely admit, in which I concurred.

Well, it is quite clear now that everybody was almost one-hundred-percent wrong—wrong in a perfectly astounding and entirely unexpected way. By the time this issue of The New Republic is on the newsstands, Mr. Roosevelt may have jammed his five-billion-dollar work-relief bill through the Senate in a form that is acceptable, but it will be no clear-cut victory for him. Even if the bill goes through without the McCarran amendment he will have lost prestige and have suffered significant and important reverses. And even yet he may have to accept a compromise in this wage-scale matter or give personal assurances that amount to the same thing.

The fact is that, wholly aside from the showing on this bill, Roosevelt's record in this session is one of failure rather than success. His defeat in the World Court fight was a pronounced rebuff, made worse by the cocksureness of the White House and administration leaders. When the roll call demonstrated the President's inability to muster the necessary votes, all idea of his dominance disappeared. It was not only plain that the leadership in the White House is neither loved nor feared sufficiently to keep Senators in line, but that there are other influences more potent, and far more skillfully exerted, than the President's.

In two minor but none the less decisive instances, Congress followed the World Court defeat by forcing upon Mr. Roosevelt things he did not want. One was the $60,000,000 it added to the government's operating expenses by advancing the date for full restoration of federal pay to April, instead of leaving it July, as recommended by Mr. Roosevelt. The other was the passage of another $16,000,000 free-seed bill. Last session such a bill was enacted over Mr. Roosevelt's protest. He signed it reluctantly and said emphatically that it should be the last of its kind. As a matter of fact, there is no excuse for the second free-seed appropriation. Nevertheless it was made and Mr. Roosevelt again signed it. Relatively little notice of the $60,000,000 defeat was taken in the press, although the President did send a message urging Congress to provide revenue to meet the additional expense. As for the seed bill, the press took no notice of it at all, though its passage constituted a direct defiance of Roosevelt's wishes and demonstrated the feebleness of his leaders in the House.

Other evidence of the President's legislative weakness can be found in the abandonment of his intention of again presenting the St. Lawrence Waterways treaty, it being clear he could not get it through; in the terrific confusion that surrounds his so-called social-security program, still in the House committees; in the general belief that the bonus bill will pass both branches over his veto; in the administration's conceded inability to guide the N.R.A. legislation or even to be sure there will be any, and in the opposition to the A.A.A. amendments, which are considered vital for the successful pushing of the A.A.A.'s 1935 schedule.

Two months ago no one could possibly have foreseen the situation, and the administration leaders in both House and Senate are as much surprised as anyone else. The explanation, however, is not difficult. What has happened is the inevitable result of being neither one thing nor the other; of going in both directions at once; of trying to please both sides. During a crisis, a middle-of-the-road course can be followed pretty successfully, and for a year and a half this was done. But everything now seems to show that it cannot be pursued successfully any longer.

After having had the intense hostility of the conservatives of the country through a whole session of Congress, a sharp turn to the right by Mr. Roosevelt was advertised soon after the last election. By various moves and gestures he endeavored to regain the support he had lost. Chiefly, the argument of his friends has been—and still is—that he represents the conservatives' only hope of preventing the "wild men" of Congress from running off with the country. In other words, the idea was to scare the conservative element into support of the President, and to some extent it succeeded. It was generally agreed that since his reëlection in 1936 was inevitable, it was foolish for the business interests not to make friends and go along. This feeling, however, disappeared with his holding-company attack and the new five-billion-dollar relief program. The support of the business and banking leaders who acclaimed him last November became increasingly perfunctory.

On the other hand, it is no secret that the real liberal leaders inside and outside of Washington have been alienated by what they regard as the spurious liberalism of his conduct. Their resentment is due to a number of different causes, among which may be mentioned Mr. Farley, the refusal of the President to stand by labor when the test came, the so-called purge of the A.A.A., the extraordinary, indefensible effort to defeat Bronson Cutting in New Mexico. The net result is that Mr. Roosevelt is without convinced support from either conservatives or liberals.

In the end, probably the bulk of his program will go through, but it is likely to be in an emasculated and unsatisfactory form. Things generally are in a mess. There is no longer any real strength of administration, though the set-up, so far as Congress is concerned, is ideal. Most of this is the President's own fault. He has lost not only in congressional control, but in public sentiment. Three months ago, no one doubted for a moment his reëlection next year. The probabilities still are strongly with him, but that there has been a change is not open to dispute. It is both obvious and significant.

Washington. T. R. B.

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Other People's Money

Celotex—A Story with a Moral—Lo, the Poor Stockholder!—Corporate Jekyll, Company Hyde

THE Celotex Company is a corporation that specializes in making wall board from bagasse. It was organized in 1920 and by 1929 it had outstanding over $7,000,000 in common stock, over $5,000,000 in preferred stock and over $2,500,000 in bonds. By 1930 it was one of the first corporations to sound the alarm and go into reorganization. The principal effect of this was to reduce that common stock from over $7,000,000 to $1,268,000.

But this did not end its troubles. By 1932 it went into a receivership in Wilmington, Delaware. But Mr. Bror G. Dahlberg, president of the company, continued to act as its operating head under the receivers. Nothing of importance happened until late in 1933. Then Mr. Dahlberg met a gentleman named Wallace Groves. A new plan of reorganization was hatched and these two gentlemen proceeded to put it over.

At this point it is easy to see one of the fruits of a precious American institution—the personal holding company. No man needs to do anything in his own name. He does not have to assume an alias like a common malefactor. Instead he organizes a personal corporation and does business under and behind that corporate alias. In fact he is not limited to one company. He may have half a dozen. He can operate as Jekyll No. 1, Jekyll No. 2, Hyde No. 1 and Hyde No. 2 and so on. Mr. Groves had his little corporation called Phoenix Securities Corporation. Mr. Dahlberg, operating head of the company, its president, the employee of the stockholders, also had his little company, the Red Crest Corporation, owned by his wife and another member of his family. But this was not enough. The two organized another company—the Central Securities Corporation. The Red Crest owned 40 percent of its stock. The balance, in some way, is controlled by the Phoenix Company. Its assets are only $1,000.

Why this roundabout method? Why are not Messrs. Groves and Dahlberg forced to carry on their business in their own names? Why these corporate aliases? Suppose Mr. Dahlberg, president of the company and employee of the stockholders, turned up as a participant in the reorganization profits? That would not look so good. So the fact can be concealed quite easily behind one of these personal-corporation masks.

A reorganization committee had been formed. It was selected by Dahlberg and Groves. A committee was formed to represent the common stockholders. It was hand-picked by Dahlberg and Groves. These committees merely carried out the plans of Dahlberg and Groves. This is not old stuff. This does not belong to the pre-contrition era. It happened only a few months ago.

This reorganization committee controlled by Dahlberg and Groves, but supposed to represent the corporation, made an arrangement with Dahlberg and Groves's corporation dummy, the Central Securities Corporation, to underwrite the issuance of some $499,500 of new common stock. For this it was to receive a bonus of 15,000 shares. These shares, according to Mr. Dahlberg, were at the time worth $6.60 apiece. Thus they would have a value of nearly $100,000. A fee of $100,000 for selling $499,500 worth of stock looks like pretty good business for somebody. That's a 25-percent commission. It gives them automatically one-fourth of the stock. There are some rights also attached. And, not to go into the intricate details of the whole scheme, Dahlberg and Groves would emerge with about one-half of the stock of the reorganized company.

There is more. The chairman of the reorganization committee was Mr. William B. Nichols. He was named as such by Dahlberg and Groves's dummy corporation, the Central. That corporation agreed to pay him $500 a week for his services. But later this contract was ratified by the reorganization committee and it was agreed to give him 2,500 shares of common as an added attraction.

The importance of much of this lies in the fact that in the literature put out to win the approval of security holders many of these facts were not disclosed. It was not revealed that Central was a straw corporation formed for the purpose of this plan. The manner of selecting the members of the reorganization committee and their interest in Celotex were not disclosed. It was not known that the plan was the work of Dahlberg, Groves, *et al.*, and not of the reorganization committee. The extent of Dahlberg's participation in Central was not revealed nor the manner in which Central was controlled by Phoenix and Red Crest. These facts would be unknown but for the activity of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the work of the reorganization committee under Mr. William O. Douglas, director of the Protective Committee Study, one of the most important studies being made by the S.E.C.

Still another priceless little morsel was brought out. Solicitors were trying to obtain deposits of preferred stock. At that time the stock was selling at 25 or 26 a share. On January 21 there appeared on the Dow Jones ticker a notice that a meeting of the directors of Celotex was called for February 7. It added that the purpose of the meeting was to vote on a proposal to delist the preferred stock. When stock is delisted it no longer has the benefit of the big market's trading facilities. Instantly the stock declined. But before January 21, the Phoenix Corporation had placed orders to buy from 1,000 to 2,000 shares of preferred at 19 to 20. As a matter of fact, from January 23 to 25 it did pick up more than 1,100 shares at the depreciated prices.

This recent case illustrates clearly the necessity for two essential reforms:

1. A complete overhauling of the rules and methods under which distressed corporations are reorganized and the exclusion from the plans, save to give advice, of the men who bring these companies to disaster.

2. Denial of the personal-corporation alias permitted to promoters and bankers, which makes it impossible to know what is going on in a corporation and reorganization—or anywhere else in business for that matter.

Congress is tinkering with the holding-company evil as it affects utilities. But it ignores the subject as it affects other corporations and above all, banks, where its worst influences have been felt. Congress apparently gives no thought whatever to the personal holding company—the Jekyll and Hyde corporations of the business world.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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The Pictures Mark Time

THE TEXT for today is, you never can tell. I have just been through four musicals, the latest Shirley Temple, four miscellaneous though outstanding features, and a few oddments. As for most of these, if I didn't expect much and came out with slightly less, it was all right with me. Where it hurts is in shows like "The Whole Town's Talking" and "Ruggles of Red Gap," which the most reliable advance reports have been blowing up to anywhere from great to terrific and which, in the end, run off like nice mild entertainment and little else.

Just the same, these two films are at the top of the present heap. The first has what must be the world's most ingenious weave of half a dozen tattered strands: you knit one with the Escape of the Terror and you purl two with the Double Identity; turn and knit three with The Clerk Who Surprised Them All, and then cable-stitch through all the usual patterns of underworld intrigue—and it all holds together fine. Edward G. Robinson, in the double-exposure roles of the gunman and his meek counterpart, overplays some of it, but carries off the story rather well, especially his getting gay on the boss's liquor, his being run away with by a sub-machine gun; and the police-court sequences are put through with a very instructive trampling and buffleheaded naturalism. But the direction, the making of the picture, never rises above its material; as a consequence, the story keeps your interest, gets laughs and ends up leaving you right where you were.

"Ruggles of Red Gap" adds up to the same rough total, but it is fish from a different kettle—thanks less to the story and treatment than to the independent talents of Charles Laughton and Roland Young. Laughton in particular does as fine a piece of comedy creation as you'll see anywhere, working along behind that heavy, almost grotesque mask of a face, scheming his part, thinking it out: Not only how would a man put over this line, by what expression of face or voice, by what repose or lurch of the body, but what might have been behind all this in the way of past feeling, how would he get so drunk and devilish and slyly fogbound. To build a character in this thorough manner takes as much as to write a good novel.

But the main flaw in "Ruggles" is illustrated well enough by the part where they stage the Gettysburg Address, word for word. Superficially the thing is very cleverly done, Laughton speaking with good restraint, the men moving up from the bar, from around the tables, watching—a collection of types; and the camera itself moving around, breaking through the monotony by building up a larger picture. But basically, what a complete lack of artistic sense to attempt such maudlin heroics without a sure foundation; and, having attempted, what a boneheaded play to drive every last word of such a passage so literally down your throat. And that is the picture: a lot of talent put to work on a version of wild, woolly and kiyodling Americans that is no truer of Americans of any time than a Maurice Elvey version of a wildwest circus.

Pictures like these don't get the most out of what they've got, they don't even come up to the most that has been got out of it so far; they stand there marking time behind the lines. Anyone with any enthusiasm for the screen, for the exciting range of its possibilities and for the way, even now, it can take your breath away from time to time, must always be looking for something a little on the side of the beautiful, or strange. I suppose in common terms it is no more than a transference of the impulse, once you have learned to ride upon a bicycle, to ride no-hands. The pictures that just go on putting some easy story in work, starting at the beginning and coming out at the end, and showing no more imagination or feeling, in terms of their own medium, than the compositors who set up the original book—these pictures will serve to pass time, but their excitement is the dull excitement of Thrilling Detective.

I am always happier to pick up a film like "Night Life of the Gods," from which little was expected and much came forth. In the first quarter, that is—the last part is not worth sitting through. In the early stretches the late Lowell Sherman got his hands on something, perhaps inadvertently: he was doing Thorne Smith's novel, and out of part of it he lifted a solemn elfin quality that is strange to the screen. This part keeps away from the kind of fantasy that comes out from behind a color cartoon and says Boo, not too fiercely (might scare the kiddies). It simply acts out the impossible with a ho-hum, pay-no-attention-to-it air and culminates in the stretch where Alan Mowbray, for no good reason and having just turned his family to stone (Mowbray plays with a fine edge when there is any edge to put on it), goes stalking up through a crazy slanting cornfield in the half light, with music to match, and arrives at the scarecrow, having its boots polished. Well, soon thereafter the picture goes from worse to more of it, but up to this point it exhibits what I should judge to be the quality of having something on the ball. And just for reference, I will list a few current releases that haven't: "Rumba," "Roberta," "Sweet Music" and "Folies Bergere" (the four musicals); "Kentucky Colonel," "The Enchanted April" and "After Office Hours." I've heard of worse ones, but you never can tell.

OTIS FERGUSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

American Characteristics

SIR: I read with deep interest Dr. Beard's article ["That Promise of American Life," The New Republic, February 6] endeavoring to find out what are the characteristics of this country, the more so since I came here seven years ago, an Englishwoman, full of curiosity on this score myself. I quickly realized that Americans were not the money-grubbers or "dollar chasers" the music-hall stage of Great Britain represented them to be. As a Swedish friend on board ship remarked when faced with that charge: "I cannot say I've seen a dollar go so very unchased in Europe." I was struck on arrival in this country with the energy, the lust for experimentation, the go-aheadness, the essential "democracy" of many Americans, compared to our much more tired, languid, unenterprising and class-conscious Europeans.

But I have gone about a bit in these seven years and seen a lot that has puzzled me and I wonder where Dr. Beard would put these characteristics? Many of them are very American in the sense that they are not English, German, Austrian, Italian or Russian, not as I know those countries. I refer to lynchings, to night-riders, to vigilantes threatening lawlessness and carrying out their threats. I read history and learn that vigilantes are part of the proud history and very fiber, for instance, of my adopted state, California. I see graft, corruption, bribery on a scale unadvertised

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in Europe, and that therefore can be taken to be American. I see exposures of this graft, in senatorial investigations, newspapers and magazines, and nothing happening as a result: an almost unthinkable procedure in my native England. These characteristics are indubitably "American"; but would Dr. Beard approve of them and wish to keep them for that reason? I doubt it.

But what puzzles me more about his article is this: He speaks of the "inherited phraseologies and ideologies of the American people," of "American consciousness" and "that part of the American people which has the capacity to think, resolve and govern." Now, who are "Americans" in these definitions? W. R. Hearst or Lincoln Steffens, William Z. Foster or Ralph M. Easley, Nora Conklin or J. P. Morgan? It is hardly possible that the same platforms, phraseologies or ideologies will fit them all or any one couple of them.

And a last point: Suppose we go out and sit with the brakeman, the farmer, the sheriff, the Legionnaire or the Elk for an hour, instead of spending time with dogmatic medicine men. I have done the former a great deal more than the latter in California. I find almost unanimously, in discussing certain issues, a parroting of the latest Hearst editorial or Legionnaire resolution or radio remarks by a utility propagandist being retailed to me. Or a sheriff will say: "I am a red-blooded American and I say anyone who asks for more than twenty cents an hour is a communist." Does Mr. Beard think that there is unhampered "American" thinking apart from the intense regimentation of all thinking going on now by press, radio, movies, churches, etc., all in the interests of one dominating section of the population with one political, economic and social purpose?

Carmel, Calif. ELLA WINTER.

More about "A Common Faith"

SIR: I am grateful to John Dewey for the attention he has brought to my review [The New Republic, March 13]. But I feel that his objections are based on a misreading of my text.

Mr. Dewey protests that he devoted "more space to the inadequacies of religions in their social bearings than to their intellectual inadequacies," etc. I did not intend to give the impression of denying this. What was in question in my review was not Mr. Dewey's awareness of the social shortcomings of religions, but his diagnosis of them. For him, the "supernatural and the things that have grown about it" are "encumbrances and . . . what is genuinely religious will undergo an emancipation when it is relieved from them" (page 2 of "A Common Faith"). My point is that the removal of these "encumbrances" will not change the nature of the unifying functions of religions. In the course of his argument, Mr. Dewey speaks of the social implications of his substitute for religions, but he does not mention the false character of their "unification." I consider this aspect of the problem the most important. The existence of definite material conflicts affecting our society is a recognized fact. It is a natural impulse in man to attempt a unifying attitude, but this attitude defeats itself when it serves to cover ideologically the conflicts underlying it.

The critical part of my review is more concerned with this problem of unification than with the religions themselves. Nowhere did I assert that Mr. Dewey "would put in their place a mere state of mind." The passage referred to runs as follows: "The unification accomplished by Dewey's 'religious' is not essentially different from that accomplished by the religions. It is a mere state of mind. . . . " There is a difference between my text and Mr. Dewey's transcription. It would be ridiculous to pretend that religions (including Mr. Dewey's substitute for them) are "mere states of mind." For better or worse they are more than that. But in my opinion it is correct to assert that the *unification* they pretend to realize is only ideal, that it does not solve the deeper problem of unity and that a more inclusive solution of this problem is already in sight.

Because I confined my analysis to the issue of unification, Mr. Dewey seems to have inferred that I was not aware of the other elements contained in his book, and that consequently my review expressed a subjective state of mind. Many ways of considering "A Common Faith" are possible: I chose among these an issue that seemed to me particularly relevant to the current situation. Moreover, one of the things I most value in John Dewey's important contribution to philosophy is his fight against the abuse of concepts divorced from pragmatic realities. I thought that by permitting "unity" to remain undefined, empty of concrete content, Mr. Dewey had in a sense run counter to the best part of his own method.

New York City. NORBERT GUTERMAN.

SIR: Almost without fail I read The New Republic from "kiver to kiver" so there is little I miss. I have just read the book review of John Dewey's "A Common Faith," by Norbert Guterman. When philosophers get to criticizing each other one is liable to get some choice abstractions. Mr. Guterman criticizes Mr. Dewey for using the term "unity" without definition and then he in turn talks about a "classless society." In all the religion that I know anything about I know of no greater abstraction than that. The very nature of man precludes any reality to such a term. Mankind cannot be reduced to a common denominator and neither can groups of mankind.

While recognizing the abuses and misuses of religion and burning with indignation at times over conditions and attitudes of religious people, I still am ready to defend it for its unifying power. There are some things that transcend the differences of physical conditions on this earth. I am quite sure that religion as revealed in the life and death of Jesus Christ runs nearer to reality than such abstractions as "a classless society."

Cooperstown, N. Y. IRVIN KELLEY.

An Appeal

SIR: Howard Kester, who is rendering invaluable assistance and leadership in organizing the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union in Arkansas, is maintained for this kind of work in the South by the Committee on Economic and Racial Justice, while his work is under the direction of the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief. Both Committees appeal for support of his work, requesting immediate contributions. Those who are interested in maintaining this kind of militant leadership in the South may send contributions to Miss Elizabeth Gilman, 513 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland.

Our appeal in behalf of Mr. Kester's work is in addition to, and not to be confused with, appeals for the relief and defense of the sharecroppers and their union.

NORMAN THOMAS,
For the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief,
REINHOLD NIEBUHR,
For the Committee on Economic and Racial Justice.

New York City.

Extracts from Letters

A PLEA for the support of the strike of the National Biscuit employees comes from the Inside Bakeries' Federal Labor Union. "It is obvious that the National Biscuit Company is seeking to crush its union and is employing every means of coercion, intrigue and brutal force at its disposal. On behalf of the striking employees and of all organized labor we ask readers of The New Republic throughout the nation" . . . to aid this strike.

J. J. Burns, of the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., writes in reply to the editorial on the Child Labor Amendment that appeared in The New Republic of January 30, 1935: "You refer to the hostility of the Catholic Church. This phrase, I feel, gives the erroneous impression that the Catholic Church is officially opposed to the attempt at dealing with the question of child labor by constitutional amendment. This is not so, of course. Many of her prominent ecclesiastics and laymen are against it, to be sure, and have even organized to fight it in several states. The question, however . . . is one of economics and practical policy, with no moral or religious implications. The ardent support of Monsignor John A. Ryan of the Catholic University should be recalled in this connection. Hence, instead of the "hostility of the Catholic Church" a more accurate phrase would be "the hostility of many Catholics, lay and clerical, to a measure that in their eyes seems unwise for various reasons."

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The Old Maid

The Old Maid, by Zoë Akins, founded on a novelette by Edith Wharton. Empire Theatre, January 7, 1935.

NOWHERE in town is there at present so fine an example of two players in combination as in "The Old Maid." The combination becomes all the more notable because of the balance between the two roles acted, one against the other. Miss Judith Anderson and Miss Helen Menken share to an extent that is rare the playing of two parts that are equally weighed.

The play begins with the wedding of Delia to a rich young man, though her heart belongs to an artistic fellow who has neither succeeded in his art in Paris nor come home to business so as to marry her. Then we see a nursery school in which Charlotte and her charges are about to say good evening for that day. Her rich aunt returns from Paris to attend Charlotte's marriage to a brother of Delia's husband. Among the nursery children is Clementina, a foundling who has been left to the care of a Negro family. The struggle arises between her rich young fiancé and Charlotte, as to whether or not she shall keep the nursery after her marriage. She insists on doing so. The engagement is suspended. It might have been revived but for Delia's management. When Charlotte tells her the secret of Clementina's birth—the child's father is the artist that Delia loves—she sees to it that Charlotte's marriage is blocked. Charlotte has to choose between keeping her child and marrying the young man.

The story jumps to Clementina as a young lady. Both she and her mother have gone to live with Delia, now a widow, her daughter married and gone from the house. Delia, not Charlotte, has Clementina's heart. There is no use to go into further details; but that much of the story is necessary in order to convey the singular balance between the two roles. The rest of the play consists of the sacrifice of Charlotte for the girl's good and of Delia's inner drama where the intentions are neither good nor evil. In the end Clementina is adopted, made rich by Delia and marries a seemingly worthless beloved young man—both the older ladies have had enough of worthy gentlemen. At the final curtain, Delia tells the girl of Charlotte's sacrifices for her, without telling the secret of the motherhood, and the girl runs out to the old maid, full of a strange surprise.

The play sometimes drags rather, for reasons difficult to state. There is at least a certain monotony of mood so far as the period goes. But through most of it the situation of character, even more than of narrative, remains alive and is far more sophisticated than most of our plays. "The Old Maid" is not sophisticated in the newer sense, which is to say that nobody believes any longer in anything. It is sophisticated in the sense that the lines of the drawing are not all black and white, villainous and beautific, smart or somber. Whether it is largely in the lines or more in Miss Anderson's acting is not easy to say, since the distinction between the playing and the play is, even to the practised theatregoer, a thing never quite learned; but certainly there is a concentration of reaction and a baffling confusion between good and bad impulses, conscious and subconscious, that make the role of the harder woman a long way above the usual stage simplification or hollowness. The role that Miss Menken plays is of a less dominating character type, a poignancy of retreat and advance, advance and retreat, of obstinate force of character and frightened dread of consequences. And yet its variety is as great.

It is curious to note the strangely subdued brutality combined with civilized powers of realizing the suffering of another that is displayed in "The Old Maid." This is a part of what I mean by its sophistication. In a play, for example, like "Awake and Sing," the finale consists of the young woman going away with the man she loves, a sort of wild bird; and we have no indication of anything beyond the expression of these two people's desires and egotisms. So far as we can tell from the author's discourse, to leave a baby and a defeated, devoted husband means nothing so long as the author has a lively stage substitute to entertain us. In other words, so far as civilization goes, the dénouement of "Awake and Sing" is written in a vacuum. It is curious to note, as we watch "The Old Maid," the extent to which some of the restrictions of conduct, decency, standards and so on are dated. They are used dramatically to entertain the audience with social exhibits as it were. Both in the directing, however, and in the writing, care is taken not to overdo the obvious possibility of comedy. On the other hand it is interesting to observe how these very standards and conventions, a certain amount of point-of-view, help to steady and subtilize the play's material.

Superficial criticism might conclude that since certain of these standards are now to some of us absurd, the scenes that emanate from them are accordingly absurd. But this is not the case. What counts is what emerges from this conflict of the individual with the moralities that involve him. And sometimes a standard, however foolish, is so much stronger than most that only a reaction equally stronger than most can counterbalance it. The reaction of a significant character toward it is often a measure of the significance of a moral standard.

It is to the credit of the dramatist that none of this is forced in "The Old Maid." A stiffness, or even aridity, of style, appears now and again, partly the original novelette's fault, no doubt, and partly due to the playwright's efforts toward atmosphere and period. For the most part we are left to depend on the drama of character, and the other elements are left to find their place.

As a whole, the directing that Mr. Guthrie McClintic gave to "The Old Maid" is excellent, as good as any I have ever seen from him. The mounting of the play is in general handsome and spacious. I must also repeat that Miss Anderson's acting on the whole was the best, with more variety, complex meaning and far more elegance than I have ever seen her display, and that Miss Menken's performances seemed more mature, more carefully developed and more really poignant than anything I ever saw her do or attempt. I will say, also, that I have not seen a better instance of the gradation from youth to age than Miss Menken has, without much make-up device, managed to convey. From the standpoint of the producer, Mr. Moses, it is worthwhile remarking that, as happened in his production of "Four Saints in Three Acts," there is a singular impression that the artists involved in the acting, the décor and the directing have been left, to an unusual degree, free within their own scope and possibility. And wisely so.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Forty Days of Thomas Wolfe

I HAVE just read Thomas Wolfe's new novel,[1] all of the 912 big, solidly printed pages, almost every one of the 450,000 words, and, like a traveler returning safely from Outer Mongolia, I am eager to record what I heard and saw during forty days in the wilderness. It isn't so much a book review I should like to write as a topographical description of the regions newly explored, with a list of deserts and oases.

I have to report that the good passages in the novel are, first of all, the picture of Uncle Bascom Pentland, originally published by itself and now partly deprived of its effectiveness through being sawed and mortised into another framework, but still grotesque and vastly appealing; then the description of the little people in Professor Hatcher's course in dramatic writing; then the burlesque adventures of Oswald Ten Eyck in search of food and fame; then the death of old Oliver Gant, a tremendous Dostoevskian scene; then the comedy of Abe Jones, the melodrama of the consumptive cuckold, the tragedy of the Coulson family at Oxford; then the disintegration of Francis Starwick, whom I knew at college under his own name, and whose story is long enough to form a good novel in itself; then finally the train ride to Orléans and the episode of the old humbug countess. Together these scenes compose at least a third of the book, and they are extraordinarily strong and living. Thomas Wolfe at his best is the only contemporary American writer who can be mentioned in the same breath with Dickens and Dostoevsky. But the trouble is that the best passages are scattered, that they occur without logic or pattern, except the biographical pattern of the hero's life, and they lack the cumulative effect, the slow tightening of emotions to an intolerable pitch, that one finds in great novels like "The Possessed."

I have to report that the bad passages are about as numerous and as extensive in area as the good ones. There is the description of Eugene Gant's vast aloneness at Harvard, there are Eugene's reveries about time and death and the ever flowing mysterious river of life, there is his drunken police-station brawl in South Carolina, there are his anxieties as a teacher and his European musings on the lonely American soul. In particular there are the beginning of the book, in which he flees like Orestes into the North, and the end, in which he returns to set his Antæus feet on native soil. And, just as the good parts of the novel are massively and overwhelmingly good, so too the bad parts are Brobdingnagianly bad, are possibly worse than anything that any other reputable American novelist has permitted himself to publish.

The good and the bad can both be expressed in a general statement. When Wolfe is writing about people that his hero loved or hated or merely observed with delighted curiosity, then he writes with real vigor and with an astonishing sense of character; he writes clear, swinging prose. But when he is dealing with the hero, Eugene Gant, he almost always overwrites; he repeats himself, grows dithyrambic, shouts and sings in blank verse, scatters his adjectives like a charge of rock-salt from a ten-gauge shotgun. He is prayerful and solemn; all his grand wild humor is hidden away. One could scarcely say that "Of Time and the River" becomes a bad novel whenever the hero appears on the scene, for he is always there; but the author's style goes flabby as soon as attention is taken away from the outside world and concentrated on the hero's yearning and hungering soul.

The truth is that although Eugene Gant has many individual and warmly human traits, they scarcely add up into a character. He is not anyone that we should immediately recognize in the street, like his father or his Uncle Bascom Pentland. Rather than being a person, he is a proud abstraction, "a legend of man's hunger in his youth," and his actions are magnified to such an extent that they cease to resemble those of ordinary young men. Never, in the course of this novel, does Eugene go for a walk: no, "like an insatiate and maddened animal he roamed the streets, trying to draw up mercy from the cobblestones." Never does he study a textbook: no, "he would prowl the stacks of the library at night, pulling books from a thousand shelves and reading them like a madman." If he received a polite letter of rejection, he was not merely downhearted: no, "he stood there in the hallway . . . his face convulsed and livid, his limbs trembling with rage, his bowels and his heart sick and trembling with a hideous gray nausea of hopelessness and despair, his throat choking with an intolerable anguish of resentment and wrong." Then, when he began to write once more, "the words were wrung out of him in a kind of bloody sweat, they poured out of his fingertips, spat out of his snarling throat like writhing snakes: he wrote them with his heart, his brain, his sweat, his guts." He is Goethe giving birth to Werther, he is Orestes in flight before the Furies, he is Young Faustus, Telemachus, Jason, he is Antæus seeking his own life-restoring soil—and at the same time he is a tall young man from Asheville who studied at the University of North Carolina and at Harvard, taught at Washington Square College, spent two years abroad, came back to Brooklyn—he is unmistakably Thomas Wolfe himself, and there are at least two occasions, on pages 186 and 466, where the author refers to Eugene in the first person singular.

"Of Time and the River" might have been a better book if the author had spoken in the first person from beginning to end. It seems to me that frank autobiography is a safer form than the disguised autobiographical novel. When the writer says "I felt this" and "I did that," he is forced, paradoxically, to look at himself from the outside. There are common rules of courtesy that compel him to moderate his boasts, to speak as one person among others, even to invent a character for himself. On the other hand, if he speaks of "me" under the guise of "him," all his acts are made conveniently impersonal. He is encouraged to regard himself, not as a character among others, but rather as a unique and all-embracing principle—in youth as the universal Boy, in manhood as the universal Poet. He is tempted to exhibit and magnify and admire his own adventures, till perhaps he reaches the point of wondering how he could ever "find a word to speak the joy, the pain, the grandeur bursting in the great vine of his heart, swelling like a huge grape in his throat—mad, sweet, wild, intolerable with all the mystery, loneliness, wild secret joy, and death, the ever returning and renewing fruitfulness of earth." In

[1] Of Time and the River, by Thomas Wolfe. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

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other words, he reaches the point of writing like a God-intoxicated ninny.

Such are the reports and ideas that I carried back from my forty days in the wilderness. This book of Thomas Wolfe's is better and worse than I have dared to say—richer, shriller, more exasperating. Cut down by half, it would be twice as good. Strangely, in the midst of its gigantic faults, it gives you the idea that Wolfe might and could write a novel that was great beyond question. But he will not write it until he chooses some other theme and some other hero than a young Faustus and Orestes squeezing out his blood, his sweat, his guts and not enough of his brains to produce the fabulous great American novel.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

America's Capacity

The Chart of Plenty, by Harold Loeb and Associates. New York: The Viking Press. 180 pages. $2.50.

THIS IS the most important book of the twentieth century that has come within my ken. Why such a superlative statement of opinion? Mr. Loeb's book represents the first attempt, on a scale commensurate with the issues involved, to apply the rationality of engineering and accountancy to the central problem of American life and economy, namely, the capacity of American technology, the technical arts, labor and management as applied to American resources, to provide a decent standard of living for all the people in the United States. For more than a century this idea has been floating vaguely around in the intellectual climate. Individuals, such as Stuart Chase, have attacked the problem with limited resources for inquiry and fact finding; but no such organized and competent staff has previously been employed in exploring it.

Entirely apart from any criticisms that can be made of the assertions and conclusions embodied in it, the volume ought to mark an epoch in economic thought. The Western world stands bewildered amid the theories, ideologies, logic-chopping and hair-splitting of people who are called economists. The more the schoolmen, scholastics and theologians of secularism wrestle with the crisis in economy and tear at one another with words, discriminations, distinctions, definitions and other verbiage of moral import, the more confused becomes the issue of finding our way out of the misery and degradation that threaten us.

The authors of this volume, to be followed by elaborating documents, put aside the word-battles of centuries and go straight to the heart of the problem: Is it physically possible for the people of the United States to produce and enjoy the goods necessary to a decent existence?

The inquiry on which this volume is based was set up by the Civil Works Administration of the United States government in February, 1934. Under the leadership of Harold Loeb and his associates—Felix Frazer, Walter Polakov, Graham Montgomery, William Smith and Montgomery Schuyler—a body of thirteen experts and some forty or fifty assistants was organized, work was planned, special studies were made and a bewildering multitude of findings were dovetailed and brought into a consistent whole. And to give graphic presentation to the materials and the upshot, facts and conclusions are plotted in one great chart entitled "Possible Production (Plant Capacity) and Possible Consumption (Budget of Need) Measured in Terms of Accomplished Production, 1929 (Effectively Demanded and Supplied)." The accompanying text elucidates the methods followed and the columns and segments of the chart.

From what has just been said it is evident that this inquiry differs fundamentally from the study entitled "America's Capacity to Produce," published last year by the Brookings Institution. The latter was a survey of actual plant capacity in 1929. Although the authors of the Brookings inquest made clear in their text exactly what they were doing, they used a title and many phrases that did not in fact correspond to the limitations they set to their performance. They did not in truth present a picture of "America's Capacity to Produce," unless it be taken for granted that the plant capacity of 1929 represented the total potentiality of American technology, technical arts, management, labor and resources. Economists may, if they like, take this for granted, but engineering rationality can do nothing of the sort. Unwittingly the authors of the Brookings study also used phrases in their pages lending countenance to the wholly false generalization that America's "capacity" to produce in 1929, if used to the utmost, could have turned out only fifteen billion dollars' worth of goods in addition to the amount actually produced.

Mr. Loeb and his associates have fallen into no such error. They have not assumed that the economic set-up of 1929, including the division of plant capacity into capacity for producers' goods and capacity for consumers' goods, represented America's capacity to produce. The set-up for 1815 did not represent it finally. Why should the set-up for the year 1929 or any other year, as distinguished from knowable or known potentials, be taken? Nor do Mr. Loeb and his associates fall into the error of assuming that actual and total capacity to produce can be studied, analyzed and estimated apart from predetermined standards of living measured by individual, family and institutional budgets consolidated into a national budget. To illustrate, America could produce within a few years five times as much lard as was produced in 1929, if sufficient energies were turned to that foolish enterprise. What can and ought to be produced in any one division of economy depends upon what is and should be produced in all or nearly all other divisions of economy. So Mr. Loeb and his associates have carried along with their studies of productive capacity their predetermined total and detailed summary of consumer needs.

Since this volume is itself a closely knit summary of multitudinous findings and determinations, it cannot be summarized in a book review. For the moment we must be content with the grand conclusion: "The existing resources, plant and personnel of the United States are not only capable of providing a high standard of life for the entire population of the United States . . . but are also capable of simultaneously replacing obsolete equipment and expanding the plant at a rate somewhat higher that the satisfactory rate practised during the years 1923 to 1929." And on pages 170-178 is set up a table showing the elements of that standard of life, from food, clothing and shelter to perfumes, amusements and books. Stuart Chase gives a more picturesque summation in his brief "Foreword."

No doubt flocks of statisticians will begin to hack and tear at this book. They may, for all I know, find flaws and inconsistencies in it. But its method and challenge will stand. The application of budget (or needs) analysis and engineering rationality to the problem of supplying food, clothing and shelter for the American people is the only approach that promises a way out of the present defeatism and social degradation. When and if economists, politicians, statesmen, labor leaders and feminists get around to seeing it, we may expect the fog to lift and something be started that will astonish mankind.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

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A King of Villains

Leopold the Unloved, by Ludwig Bauer. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 349 pages. $3.50.

IN ORDINARY, quiet times, no king of the Belgians, however able, is likely to achieve great distinction: he is too much restricted by the smallness of the country and the provisions of the Constitution. Leopold II has attained an immortality of infamy. Not, however, as king of the Belgians, but as founder and absolute master of the Congo slave state.

By birth a king, Leopold was a speculator and gambler by choice and temperament. Belgium is one of the most highly industrialized regions of Europe, and was known throughout the nineteenth century as a capitalists' paradise. Nine-tenths of the adult male population were without the franchise. Labor laws and factory regulations were practically non-existent. (In 1890 a law was proposed to prohibit the labor of children under 12, and to restrict the labor of boys under 16 and girls under 21 to twelve hours a day!) But Belgium did not tempt the king's enterprising spirit. He chose to invest his money in distant, undeveloped countries, where the risk was greater but where the chances of making extraordinary profits were also greater. He was ever on the lookout for such opportunities, whether they were to be found in Albania or Syria, Mesopotamia or China, Morocco or Zanzibar—a Cortez or Pizarro of the high-capitalistic era. As luck would have it, Henry M. Stanley had just come back from a three years' exploration of the Congo River. Here was a country eighty times the size of Belgium; without definite frontiers, therefore capable of indefinite extension; with a comparatively large population that lived in idleness, but could be made to work (as Leopold imagined) like Belgians; and this country was, in the eyes of international law, without a master. Leopold resolved to gain possession of it. Thus would the kinglet become a king, the constitutional monarch an absolute master of twenty million slaves.

He finally did gain possession of it after years of effort and intrigue, by hook and by crook, by posing as a patron of geographical science, as a philanthropist burning with zeal for the suppression of the slave trade, as a Christian ardent for the conversion of the heathen, as a champion of free trade and equal opportunity, who would open up the country to all comers. Through an American agent he obtained recognition of his title to the country from a naïve United States government. The European Powers followed the American example at the Berlin Conference. Thereupon Leopold proceeded to fulfill his pledges. Independent traders were hounded out of the country. Every obstacle was put in the way of missionaries who wished to reach the interior. The Arab slave traders were routed and expelled, but the natives were made to do forced labor—carrying burdens, gathering wild rubber and ivory—so effectively, that in twenty-five years their number dwindled to one-half. The whole aim was to plunder the country of its natural wealth as fast as the natives could be forced to do so by means of the lash, the rifle and fire. Not a plantation was established, not a school was opened. But four hundred million gold francs accrued to Leopold alone. The licensed companies, the financial partners, the officials and foremen got theirs. And when the sources of wealth began to dry up, and the "Congo Horrors" became a standing caption in the newspapers and a subject of discussion in parliaments, Leopold sold the Congo to Belgium for one hundred million francs.

Such is the bare outline of the story. For the juicy details the reader must turn to Herr Bauer's book, which, by the way, had not yet been published in German when the English translation was made. But even the roughest sketch would be incomplete without the following episode. The Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince Rudolf had committed suicide or had been killed, and Leopold's daughter, Stephanie, became a widow. The news reached Brussels, and Leopold was about to set out for Vienna, when he received the condolences of his ministers. He dictated this reply:

> We thank you for your kind expressions regarding the disaster that has befallen us. We know the feelings of the ministers, and count upon their sympathy in the terrible trials which God has laid upon us. Do whatever you can to help M. Van Neus to place more [Congo] shares in the market; this would be most agreeable to me. Once more I thank you.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

Revolution Made Easy

The Douglas Manual of Social Credit, compiled by Philip Mairet. New York: Coward-McCann. 116 pages. $1.50.

The ABC of Social Credit, by E. S. Holter. With an Appendix by Allan R. Brown. New York: Coward-McCann. 96 pages. $1.

THE NEED for an intelligently compiled and orderly presentation of the theories of Social Credit is well met in this "recension of passages from the works of Major C. H. Douglas." Mr. Mairet has assembled, from ten of the better known writings of this leader of the New Economics, much instructive material touching on the nature and origin of money; money and credit; the financial system (including banks, taxation and loans); the industrial system; purchasing power; the A+B theorem; trade and nationalization; the just price and the national dividend. The result is an impressive body of doctrine, whose influence is becoming considerable among those who believe that revolutionary social changes may be effected by operating on a few minor ailments in the monetary and financial sectors. Two criticisms: none of the quoted matter carries a date; and it is unfortunate that a preliminary section was not devoted to relevant extracts from the work of Arthur Kitson, one of Major Douglas' respected teachers.

But the Social Credit movement—as Miss Holter's resumé of its fundamental ideas more clearly shows—is primarily an attempt to heal, and perpetuate, capitalist society by treating one symptom of it, the *financial* structure, as though it were the exclusively responsible disease. Miss Holter's analysis of the current metaphysic of money, credit, costs and prices follows the Douglas line with no deviations and little originality. Private ownership, regarded as "a meaningless dogma" in this era of abundance, is nevertheless to be respected, not only for industry but for the very banking institutions it is proposed to reform altogether. Monetary abuses are to be corrected, but without prejudice to "the price system," and all the advantages of a collective society are to be obtained without suppression of individual initiative, even with respect to the profit motive. Reading such books today, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that—as Ramon Fernandez has said of fascism—"Social Credit is the art of quieting the social unrest of intellectuals, by leading them to engage in a revolution which will neither alter their habits nor sacrifice their interests."

HAROLD WARD.

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Spirit of the Pampas

Don Segundo Sombra: Shadows on the Pampas, by Ricardo Güiraldes. Translated by Harriet de Onís, with an introduction by Waldo Frank. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

TO HISPANIC literature, Argentina has contributed three outstanding works around the life of the *gaucho:* Sarmiento's "Facundo," Hernández' "Martín Fierro," and Güiraldes' "Don Segundo Sombra." Only the student of Spanish culture would be interested in their subtle differences. To the American reader desirous of a good story, "Don Segundo Sombra" offers an optimistic outlook, unburdened by any intellectualism. This episodic novel will hold his interest as he reads of the herders always moving on, hiring themselves out now at one ranch, now at another, till the herd is driven to its destination or the ponies and mares are taught to accept the saddle without arching their backs or playing tricks on their riders. There is no love story, and sex is a negligible element. Don Segundo, the mentor of the boy in the story, is the surviving representative of the Pampas. The heroes of Sarmiento and Hernández were fierce fighters against the authorities and the Indians, but the hero of Güiraldes, though he moves within organized society, exemplifies only the admirable virtues of the *gaucho* outlaw. Through his disarmingly simple story, Güiraldes has built up a poetic atmosphere that illumines and justifies the ways of the Pampas.

"Don Segundo Sombra" is like "Don Quixote" on a different level. Both tell of the closing chapter in a people's history and the most secret yearnings of their authors. Ricardo Güiraldes, the son of a rich rancher, imaginatively projects himself into the life of his *guacho* (orphan waif) who willed to become a *gaucho.* The boy, through his contact with the uneventful daily tasks of herders and horse-tamers, succeeds in hardening himself to the demands of the Pampas, and when he is a master in his trade discovers he is the son of a rich ranch owner. This is not like our success stories, for the hero then feels most disconsolate, and blindly wishes to escape his fate. In spite of the three more years of life with Don Segundo, his "godfather," the young man is defeated in his will to be the poor *gaucho* of the Pampas. We are made to understand that Argentina's past, her tradition and her masculine mode of life received a deadly blow from the sudden wealth thrust upon her. ". . . . I grieved at the poverty I was losing. Why? Because in poverty lived all my days as a wandering herder; and deeper still, that vague need to be forever on the move, which is like a thirst for the road and a lust, each day increasing, to possess the round earth."

Like all truly Hispanic literary work, "Don Segundo Sombra" is more than the creation of one man. It illustrates with precision Menéndez Pidal's theory about the production of a popular Spanish book. A highly sensitive man of letters picks up a theme very dear to the hearts of his fellows. By remaining faithful to the tradition of the people he utilizes their folkways and their values. Güiraldes has written a folktale with the flavor and naïveté of the best traditions of the Pampas. Stories, customs and the tasks of the folk are described with the art of a genius. Since his purpose in writing this novel was to underscore the positive virtues of the *gaucho,* when the *gaucho* has ceased to be a social class, and the lyrical qualities of the Pampas, no image passes his censorship that does not fit the story and its environment. He wields the simile with an adroitness learned in the most exacting of literary schools. And through his style we come to have a feeling for the intuitive realities of the Pampas.

M. J. BENARDETE.

Microbes Die in Bed

Rats, Lice and History, by Hans Zinsser. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 316 pages. $2.75.

THE OSTENSIBLE nucleus of this sizable volume is a pamphlet of ninety-one pages about the origin, spread and possible decline of typhus (Brill's disease, U.S.A.). The rest is preface. Dr. Zinsser has cast the main part of his material into the form of a biography—a device well suited to acquaint the layman dramatically with the life history of the subject. For, like other great plagues that have periodically scourged mankind, typhus has a distinct personality and, like what it feeds on, it has also a normal expectation of life.

To the plotting of a vital curve for typhus, Dr. Zinsser has devoted his best efforts since 1915. He believes that his hero, after an obscure childhood in the East, was brought into the Western world in the last decade of the fifteenth century, when Don Ferdinand the Catholic imported mercenaries from Cyprus to fight the Moors. What he calls its real period of vigor and wild oats was spent partly in prolonging the border wars between Turkey and Hungary, but more largely in frustrating the campaigns of Gustavus Adolphus, Wallenstein and Tilly. During the eighteenth century it traveled, under numerous aliases, wherever there were lousy men or flea-bitten rats; and to retail its achievements since that time would be tedious in so brief a space as this. Today, however, it remains endemic in Southeastern Europe. Tomorrow it may be epidemic wherever there is severe privation in an urban community. And at any moment it may become pandemic if there is a worldwide mobilization of armies. In modern warfare, tacticians are helpless before its impartial strategy; and generals can do little but mark time, keep themselves deloused and wait to mop up when typhus has left the field.

Obviously, then, Dr. Zinsser's hero still is full of vigor and is only out of work for the moment. Such a life history may be closed in one of three ways. Typhus may burn itself out, in time, as the "Picardy sweat" seems to have done; a vaccine may be developed to immunize men—and presumably lice—against the filterable virus that causes it; or else it may disappear before the combined power of the rattrap and the bathtub. Since this last solution, to be effective, would presuppose a long period of international amity, Dr. Zinsser does not expect much from it. However, like a good scientist, he believes that the disease need not be left to run its course, and like a good humanist he hopes that the virus may be controlled by intelligent cooperation among men of good will.

Dr. Zinsser, in short, is a scientific humanist—a phenomenon one does not encounter every day, or even in every publishing season. Literate, ironical, expert, discursive, he belongs—for all his distrust of surgeons—to the school of Dr. Rabelais. And it is this Rabelaisian temper, no doubt, that has led him into prefacing his ninety-one-page pamphlet on typhus with an introduction of more than three times that length. The bearing of the preface upon what follows is not always clear; but here is lively reading that deals, among other matters, with Hitlerism, the sublime, rats, T. S. Eliot and encephalitis. There is also a footnote on Heliogabalus—but no index.

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Books in Brief

Via Mala, by John Knittel. New York: Frederick A. Stokes and Company. $2.50.

THIS STORY is set in post-war Switzerland, against a detailed and yet unified social background. Minor officials and wealthy business men struggle to maintain the established order. Workmen and peasants, unsettled by the growth of poverty and the failure of banks, restlessly vacillate between communism, fascism and the old bureaucracy. Demagogues and socialist leaders spring up. Politicians of the old guard make irrelevant speeches in the old style. As a picture of a people and a country, "Via Mala" is an unqualified success: as a story it falters. Like Hawthorne, Mr. Knittel attempts to show the effects of a sin on the lives of all it touches. Murder is committed, and a family is bound to suffer the pangs of conscience. But the author's characters, though well rounded, are static. The story continues after the murder for another four hundred-odd pages, with many passages of great intensity and much that is interesting; but it falls into diffuseness. The "inevitability of a Greek tragedy," which the publisher claims for it, has wholly disappeared. I. L.

The Victor Book of the Symphony, by Charles O'Connell. With a foreword by Leopold Stokowski. New York: Simon and Schuster. 550 pages. $3.50.

The one good thing in this book is its description of the instruments of the orchestra. This, however, is of no use to the lay reader in his real difficulty, which is with the form *(i.e.,* the relations of details) in each symphony. Mr. O'Connell's general description of the form of the symphony is inadequate; and his treatment of individual works runs like this: "New fragments of loveliest melody mysteriously materialize from the nebulous and plastic material. . . . The clarinet diffidently intrudes with a gentle little song, strings supplying a diaphanous accompaniment in the background, and flutes, above, showering little cascades of glittering notes upon the curving outlines of the woodwind's song." Or this, of the second-act duet of "Tristan": "Here is love that is fierce and exigent and consuming and insatiable; love which at a look, a word, a touch, races through the blood like flames . . . love which is normal and carnal and human. . . ." Mr. Stokowski thinks this is wonderful. B. H. H.

The Scented Garden: Anthropology of the Art of Love in the Levant, by Dr. Bernhard Stern. New York: Book Collectors' Association. 450 pages, illustrated. $6.

Sex may be getting a little out of date, but the good old sex-book racket is still flourishing. Only this morning there arrived a circular advertising "The Scented Garden," a book of which so few copies remain that it is painful to mention. And what is even more sad, the book can be sent only to "*adult* students of Anthropology, Sociology . . . and members of the learned professions." Because of its unique contents, the publishers explain. "As a member of the medical profession," they go on, "you will surely appreciate the manner in which Dr. Stern discusses . . . a host of subjects." —"As a lawyer you will find [certain chapters] instructive data for comparative jurisprudence" (if nothing else). "As a student of anthropology . . . you will surely agree with us that no other works . . . treat the subject with such thoroughness . . . and scientific spirit." But as someone just a shade on the gay-dog side, with a

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good squint for peeping and a tendency toward frolic, you will probably eat it up, you can't get there fast enough, judging from the table of contents, which includes ("illustrated with photographs of Feminine beauty"): Wives of Mohammed, The Child, Marital Duties in Turkey, Royal Marriages, The Strange Rape in Persia, Mothers and Wet Nurses, Polygamy, Pubic Hair and the Shaving of the Sexual Area, Anthropological Study of Artificial Sex Organs the World Over, Impotence, Debauchery, Depravity in Constantinople, and Wedding Customs. The book is described as "a jewel of the printer's art." O. F.

The Elaghin Affair and Other Stories, by Ivan Bunin. Selected and Translated by Bernard Guilbert Guerney. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Mr. Guerney's selections of stories for this book are mostly from Bunin's "middle" period and are not very fortunate. It is weary and trivial Bunin that you find here—stock tales of nostalgia and ideal love, also some grotesque excursions into the abnormal ("The Elaghin Affair"). Bunin is even farther removed from Dostoevsky's brand of psychology than was his master, Turgenev. He is in constant dependence on the impressionistic prose-poem for his effects, with the whole range of tricks thrown in—evocation of musical effects, pure form through symbolism, artificially poetic perceptions. It is all delicately molded and even charming in its way; but it has been done too many times before, and done better. The only piece of any solidity is the long story, "Dry Valley," told with all of Bunin's old-time brilliance and presenting, in the decline and fall of the once noble Khruschyovs, a foretaste of that complete collapse of the Russian nobility that was to begin long before the Revolution. A. K.

Contributors

BROADUS MITCHELL is professor of Political Economy at Johns Hopkins. A native Kentuckian, he has interpreted the South in various books, and has written extensively on economics and national politics. His latest book is "A Preface to Economics."

MELVIN M. FAGEN is adviser on International Affairs for the American Jewish Committee and is also a member of the Committee on Immigration Policy.

NATHANIEL PEFFER has just finished a book, "Must We Fight in Asia?" which will be published shortly by Harpers. He is also the author of "China: The Collapse of a Civilization" and "The White Man's Dilemma."

MEYER PARODNECK is a New York lawyer who was a delegate to the International Coöperative Congress held in London during September, 1934.

CHARLES A. BEARD made headline news recently for his attack on William Randolph Hearst in Atlantic City. He is the author of many books, the most recent of which is "The Open Door at Home."

HERMAN SIMPSON, formerly an editor of The New York Call, contributed to the symposium, "Recovery Through Revolution."

HAROLD WARD contributes frequent reviews to The New Republic and writes regularly on "The Sciences and Society" for The Living Age.

M. J. BENARDETE is a member of the Romance Language Department of Brooklyn College and an editor of Revista Hispánica Moderna, published by La Casa de las Españas of Columbia University.

GEORGE LIBAIRE is a free-lance writer who contributes articles and reviews to various publications.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Isabel Lewis, B. H. Haggin, Otis Ferguson and Alfred Kazin.

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